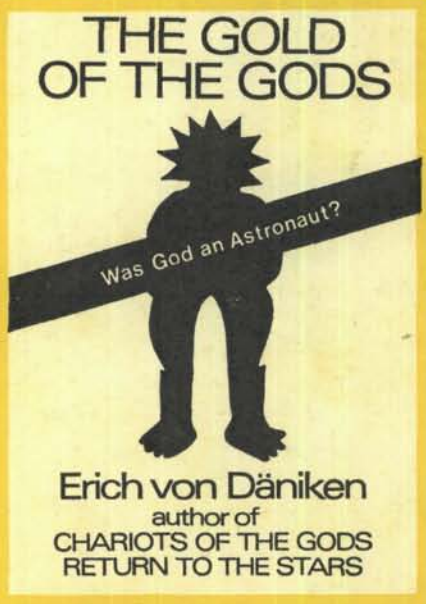
Encounter

August 1973 35p

ANATOMY OF A WORLD BEST-SELLER

FRAUD? FANTASY? SCIENCE?



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a personal memoir

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Michael Shanks

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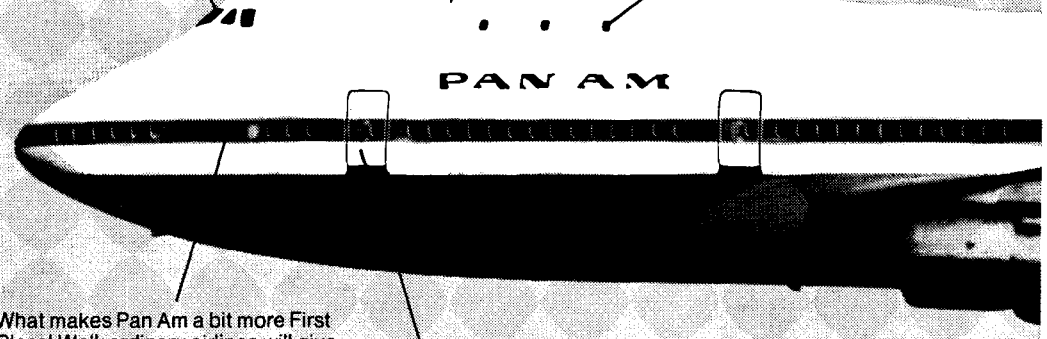

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AUGUST 1973

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". . . We are a polyglot bunch here at the Common Market headquarters. We read *Le Monde, The Times*, the *Herald-Tribune*, the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, the *Corriere*, and what-not every day. We look at *Der Spiegel*, and *L'Express*, and leaf through *Time/Newsweek*, etc., etc. . . . But may I tell you that nothing on any day or in any week gives many of us so much pleasure—and so much instruction—as the monthly copy of the new ENCOUNTER. That it comes from England, so often taken to be provincial and 'off-shore', gives us special cosmopolitan pleasure. . . . It is the one journal that gives us the feeling that we are indeed in touch with the main intellectual currents of European—no, I should say Western—civilisation. . . ."

L.C. (Brussels)

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Louise Collis

From the Next World

I REMEMBER that the sun shone brightly for a moment as I passed through the enormous iron gates enclosing the museum where I worked as an attendant. The toecaps of my shoes glinted as I walked, for I was always very neat and clean. I had a copy of *The Times* under one arm and, in the other hand, an exercise book held open in front of my face. It was filled with my poems, which were all of a melancholy complexion: they sang of funerals, deaths and monstrous births; of war and pestilence; the eruption of volcanoes and appalling tidal waves; the beauty of the stars as seen by a poet all alone on an empty strand; his subsequent reflections. I had immense faith in these compositions, although I had never managed to get one printed, not even in the kind of magazine that did not pay contributors. They thought my work unfashionable.

But in this they showed a complete misapprehension of the literary gift. What has the passing show to do with the ultimate truths of the universe? Why should reality and the supernal vision be trapped, nailed, written down, more easily when perching on a dustbin than while standing on a beach, as I had done, at two-thirty a.m.? I did not think it necessary to pursue such questions further because my whole life and arrangements depended on the fact that I was an unrecognised genius. I could not doubt it after the many hours I had spent sitting on my stool among the glass cases, cocooned in that peculiar stuffy smell produced by central heating, lack of ventilation and odd members of the public.

My gallery contained a quantity of paleolithic axeheads, the points of arrows, bits of antlers and other ancient knick-knacks. One of the most remarkable exhibits showed the inside of a cave, two feet wide and eighteen inches high. In the middle stood a rough-looking man with a bit of fur tied round his private parts. He was in the act of drawing a mammoth on the roof. His family were disposed round him in attitudes of admiration. The scene was illuminated by concealed blue lights.

But my favourite piece was the articulated skeleton of a sabre-toothed tiger, said to have inhabited the dark purlieus of the cave depicted, or another offering similar accommodation. These huge bones were suspended from girders directly over the artist's head. They were perfectly white and cast large shadows on the upper walls, as if the ghosts of many tigers prowled, their flesh invisible, the foundations only of their strength and power made manifest. As one walked about the room, they merged and separated. If one ran from side to side their sabre teeth swung and chattered in their jaws as though a desperate hunger had settled on them.

I had taken the job of attendant because it seemed to suit my particular circumstances. I had not come to this conclusion lightly. First I had gone round all the galleries, observing how almost everyone was asleep on his stool. Those still awake stared vacantly before them as if they had been mesmerised for a long time. They were warm and dry and earning their bread without the slightest exertion, as far as I could see. Only the ones in the entrance hall were somewhat disturbed in their dreams. Here I could read the classics in peace. Here I could write my poems and not starve to death in the course of my labours.

"Down with the critics! Down with the establishment! Down with the bosses and their cowardly henchmen!" I exclaimed in a soft whisper, ascending the steps of the museum. These were covered thickly by the droppings of pigeons who lived in the portico

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above. I gripped *The Times* in one hand and my manuscripts in the other like talismans. I went to the staff cloakroom. There my colleagues were gathered round a negro, newly recruited.

"Do you 'ave the pictures in your country?" demanded one suspiciously.

"Yes, indeed," replied the darkie in an ingratiating voice. "I love films."

" 'Ow can they?" said another. "Why, I seen a picture about them places only last week. There they was, sitting in their 'uts, three parts naked and not a chair, nor table, nor pair of curtings to their name. And you tell me you got the pictures there. Cor! I ask you!"

"That film was not about my country," said the negro flatly. "I lived in a city and I had a full half share in a bicycle."

"You must of bin there," replied the other. "They was all as black as top 'ats. I could see it plain, even though it weren't in colour."

The rest of them yelled: "Haw, haw, haw! Did you ever 'ear the like?" They rolled on their heels and clutched their stomachs.

I HAD GREAT HOPES that I would be able to take my mop and duster from the cupboard and escape to my gallery without being noticed. But in my secret haste I knocked a bucket over.

"Why, it's Little Tich' imself," cried the one with the reputation for a subtle wit. " 'Ow's the writing going? Never knew such a chap for writing. Always at it 'e is. That's what's stunted 'im. 'Is mum should of put a stop to it."

"Haw, haw, haw!" bellowed the others.

"Wonder 'e ain't squint-eyed as well," shouted the wag.

"Maybe 'e is, but 'is eyes is so low down you can't see them."

"All that reading!"

"All them miles of ink!"

" 'Is dad should of belted it out of 'im."

"Should of got 'im digging the garding."

"Ar. There's 'ealthy work for growing boys."

"Keeps them growing."

"Keeps them out of trouble."

"Maybe 'e never 'ad no dad."

"That's more than likely from the look of 'im."

These remarks came flying round my head like wasps. I felt very angry and a blush went right over the tops of my ears. I sprang on to a cupboard and waved my arms for silence.

They gazed at me in astonishment. I had never retaliated before. Some actually had their mouths open.

"Friends and acquaintances," I cried in a rushing falsetto, "permit me to put my side of the case. I am no ordinary man, either in appearance or character. I have an inner certainty that every single one of my ambitions will be fulfilled, even the most far-fetched and unsuitable. For it is a mistake to have tame dreams of the future. These betray the irresolute, the dull, the small in spirit, if not in stature."

"Hear, hear," shouted the negro. "I endorse everything he says whole-heartedly."

"What is stature after all?" I screamed. "Are the aristocracy universally ten feet high? By no means. The photographs have deceived you. I have it on the best authority that the Duke of St Ives is a midget and any cameraman who takes him placed at less than three yards in front of the rest of the group is instantly sacked and threatened with prosecution for malice aforethought."

"Cor!" remarked one of my audience. "Can you credit it?"

"Go on," said another. "You move in 'igh society, you do."

" 'E's never no midget. Why, 'e knows the queen."

"Leave her gracious majesty out of it," yelled the negro.

"Yes, yes," I screeched, stamping my little feet and making all the teacups inside the cupboard ring like a round of applause. "Let us not fly off into generalities of that sort. I think we can take it as proved that mere physical inches are no guide to a man's ability. I shall substantiate my claims almost immediately. I swear I will. I swear. I swear. I know. I feel." I was obliged to get out my handkerchief and hold it in front of my face. "Ah-ha," I muttered fiercely through this veil, while tears collected on the point of my chin. "I'll be revenged. I'll have you dancing to my tune soon enough. I am a man of resource. What am I saying, dear friends? It's the greatest mistake to antagonise uneducated people, if it can be avoided."

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I REMOVED the handkerchief from my eyes and saw that the room was entirely empty except for the Curator.

"Bravo, Mr Stroat," said he, with a polite bow. "I did not realise what gifts of eloquence you have. Are you in the right job? Do you have sufficient scope for your abilities? By the way, you should have been in your gallery ten minutes ago."

"There are times when I suffer from a sensation of cramp," I replied, jumping on to the floor and assuming a respectful attitude. "But it is probably due to indigestion as much as anything. I have been told that the membranes of my stomach are unusually delicate."

The Curator opened a notebook and put a black mark against my name. I was not surprised. "You will have to hurry with your polishing and dusting," he remarked. "The public will be admitted to the museum in eight minutes precisely. Since yesterday was wet, there are a great many footprints to be eradicated, in addition to the usual marks on the cases of sticky fingers and damp noses. As you know, the Director has a particular horror of snot."

I did not stay to argue with him further, though there were many things I might have said in my defence. I had them on the tip of my tongue. But I could see that he was not in a receptive mood. His eyes were glittering under the electric light. His lips were pressed together. He snapped the elastic band round his notebook sharply. I ran down the corridor which at once became full of the staccato noise of my boots on the flagstones. It was as if a typewriter were going at top speed on my heels.

I fell on the footmarks and the snot in a frenzy. I removed a sweetpaper which had been placed over the point of an antler, believed to have been used in laying the foundations of Stonehenge; and a piece of chewed chewing-gum from the underside of the cabinet containing the model cave artist and family; and an apple-core that had been laid on a Roman altar. These objects I neatly threw out of the window. The attendant responsible for sweeping the courtyard was a particular enemy of mine. It was not so much the number of insults he had paid me—I'd grown used to them—as the way his moustache bristled under his nostrils which were wide, black and cavernous and moved up and down in a unique manner as he champed his baked beans in the canteen.

"Ugh!" I shuddered, wiping my fingers on a sheet of paper as the apple-core smashed on the pavement.

Within six minutes I had every footprint, dribble and bit of rubbish out of that gallery except for an acid drop, glued to the wall near the ceiling. It had been placed there by a champion spitter the day before. I had watched his performance with amazement. What magnificent lungs the kids have nowadays! I had been unable to prevent myself joining in the applause of his form mates. The master in charge had frowned superciliously at me and then given the boy such a clap on the ear that he fell on the floor with a howl.

As these scenes passed through my memory and I wondered whether it would be possible to make some literary use of them, the Curator glided in at the door.

"Well done, Stroat," he remarked, "I congratulate you. Not a smudge anywhere. Splendid work. *Vitesse*, as the French say. You have never been to Paris, I take it? Ah, there's a city for you. What monuments! What history! What museums! Why, I do believe that even the very stones of which it is composed are cultured." He tilted his eyes upwards and saw the acid drop, as I had feared he would from the beginning. "Is that a winegum, or a spider?" he asked in an absent voice.

"It is an acid drop," I reported, "spat there by a young member of the public with yellow hair."

"Hum," said the Curator, opening his notebook. "You could not reach it, I suppose? Your peculiar disability prevented you from performing your duties in this respect? Ah. How sad." He made a note.

Reaching up, I grasped his sleeve and said: "How do you mean, disability? I am a superior person. I have a whole volume of manuscript poems to prove it. Is mere competence to deal with inaccessible acid drops to be rated higher than the power to make words dance and sing, to draw the eternal verities down to the understanding of even such as you? No, sir. Don't you believe it. If you think that, you would think anything."

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I WAS GRATIFIED to see the Curator laugh, throwing up his chin towards the sweet on the wall. It has always been my policy to keep my superiors in a good temper, as far as such a thing can be managed. But there are times when I fail, being off my guard, or irritated by unimportant matters, such as personal insults, or indigestion. So I smiled genially at the underneath of his jowl, remarking: "Culture is everything to me. It might be thought that the position of attendant in a museum is a humble one, best suited to persons of low intelligence and lazy habits. That is not so, as I can easily prove, if you will condescend to hear me for thirty seconds more."

"Very well," he said indifferently, looking at his watch.

"Sir," I continued in a low and passionate voice, "I measure two foot six, but that has nothing to do with the problems by which I am confronted. Oh, I assure you. Don't interrupt me, please! I beg your pardon. I thought you were about to speak."

He bowed with one finger on his lips. The notebook and pencil in his other hand were held across his stomach. I was so close to him that I could see the creases in his waistcoat moving as he breathed.

"Consider these antlers by which we are surrounded at this moment," I shouted up towards his ears. "Consider the altars, the arrowheads and axes and, above all, the plaster caveman in his plaster cave surmounted by a tiger. This is a place of dreams where rubbish from the past is gathered up and carefully tended by superior persons, such as you and me. The fact that you are so much the larger has no relevance at all. It's a mere freak of nature. Don't let it disturb you. The important thing is that we are the only two at present awake and in our right minds. For everyone else, as you well know, has sunk into a collective doze upon the stools kindly provided by the board of directors. They are no more aware of the passing of time than these exhibits."

I banged my fist on the frame of the nearest case. I jumped on to my stool, so that my face was level with the opening in his waistcoat where he lacked a button and his shirt could be seen, heaving gently out and in. He made to open the notebook, but I immediately grasped his hand and screamed: "No, sir! Not another black mark. I forbid you. These are the last moments of our acquaintance. Why mar them by a hasty action you are bound to regret in retrospect? Because I am not so insignificant as you imagine. I see you struggling with your laughter. You are gazing at these poems I have clasped to my breast. I'm always writing, always at it, don't try to hide it, or pretend to be different from what I am. Some say study stunts the human frame. But if that's true, two foot six is a far more honourable height than six foot two. I understand now—and I hope you do also—that it is you who are a monstrosity."

I FELT QUITE intoxicated by this discovery, which I had never expected to make. I jumped on to the case containing the artist caveman and family. I looked down on the top of his head. He had a bald patch on his crown. He snatched up an antler with an angry movement.

"I advise you to control yourself, my dear sir," I piped in the shrill tone I affected in moments of excitement. "The Duke of St Ives is my particular friend. He has invited me to catalogue his library. His grace, as I'm sure you know, is highly intellectual and three foot eight. His shelves are easily accessible. 'Stroat,' he said to me, 'you are a chap after my own heart. Intelligent, neat, persecuted for your virtues. I have read your poems with admiration and I predict a great future for you.' These were his words," I screamed warmly. "I have neither added, nor deducted, anything."

The Curator was leaning against the wall, shaking from head to foot, He had replaced the antler. The acid drop was directly over his head.

"His grace recognised me as a fellow human being," I cried in a trembling voice, crouching on top of the fake caveman. "As a familiar spirit. As a unique creation, destined to fame. 'Stroat,' he said, 'I back you to the hilt,' and he took a great crusading sword from the hand of a neighbouring suit of armour."

"I have not heard of this duke," my antagonist remarked as well as he could through an unfortunate hiccough by which he was suddenly afflicted. "He must be new to the peerage. But I am sure his library is

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most interesting. Does it contain much poetry?"

"An infinity," I yelled, "written in all ages and all climes. Paradise is situated on his shelves. For what sane man can doubt that heaven lies in the imagination? Poets are supernatural, as well as immortal."

"Remarkable," he said and put on a pair of long-distance spectacles. I could see the bones above me reflected in the lenses.

"There is death before your eyes," I shouted into the hair which sprouted strongly in his ears. "You cannot see it spread across your glasses with sabre teeth and massive jaws. Have you ever considered the number of people who have been masticated, swallowed and digested by that framework on which I suppose you have detected some dust along the spine?"

"No, why should I?" he returned, stifling half a yawn. "You could not reach it with your feather broom?" The words came slowly up his throat and spattered through his lips.

"Ah, but *I* have," I continued, standing on tiptoe with my head thrown back. "For this is the world of the grave. Every object in it belongs to someone now a fossil. That is, if he can be traced at all. Immortality can be attained as an exhibit in a museum, as well as through literature."

"And as a curator?" he inquired. "As a person who has set the scene for these philosophical marvels you describe?"

"I am the smallest author ever known of," I shrieked and my voice reverberated on those massive ribs, those haunches and that tail. "When I die the statutes of the museum will require you to take my bones and put them in a case, properly labelled, with my poems displayed about my feet. Or you might have me stuffed with a pen between my fingers. I think it likely that your superiors will congratulate you on having acquired a new and interesting addition to the collection very cheaply."

Then I looked down and saw that the room was full of attendants on the point of shouting:

" 'Is dad should of put 'im on the garding to make 'im grow up proper."

"Should of knocked the nonsense out of 'is 'ead."

"Should of warmed 'is bottom."

"Should of sold 'im to a circus and 'ad done with it."

THEY WERE WAITING for the Curator to give the signal. But I was not going to be deflected. I sprang straight into the air and impaled myself on the teeth above me. I watched the Curator and the attendants, as I bled profusely into their upturned eyes.

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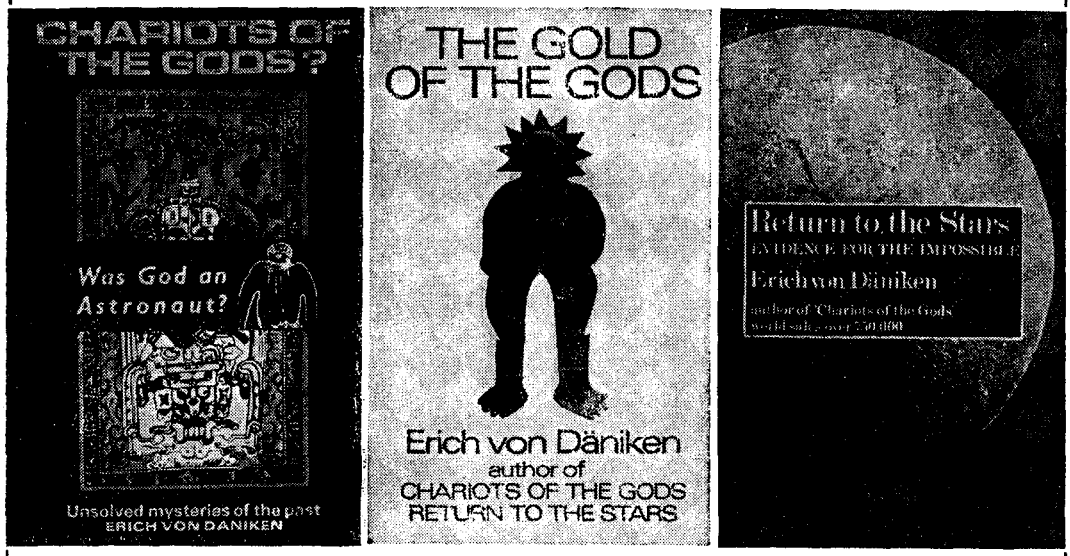

Anatomy of a World Best-Seller

Erich von Däniken's Message from the Unknown

WORLD SALES of Erich von Däniken's books,[1] which have been translated into 26 languages, are now over the nine-million mark. Even Mao's China has lately been infiltrated by Däniken's gospel of the Gods who were Astronauts. Audiences in 24 Moscow cinemas are warmly applauding a Däniken feature film, and 350,000 copies of his books were sold in the United States within 24 hours of a CBS television programme based on it. Däniken's success—compounded (as critics have charged) of "folly, fraud, and commercialism"—has become a world-wide phenomenon. The questions are: How, and Why?

"HE LAPPED IT UP." There was a note of contempt and self-pity in the voice of Juan Móricz as he recalled his conversation of roughly a year ago with Erich von Däniken. One Saturday during the first week of March 1972, Móricz joined Däniken for a meal on the tenth floor of the *Atahualpa* hotel in the Ecuadorian seaport of Guayaquil. Móricz, an adventurer long inured to fatigue, found it one of the most exhausting experiences of a lifetime. "Däniken pumped me for hours on end," he groaned.

Whatever Däniken may or may not have been fed by Móricz, the fact is that their talk smote him like a revelation. In Móricz, he had for the first time come face to face with a corporeal being who could testify to the activities of extra-terrestrial astronauts. Móricz told of caverns, of perilous descents into monstrous abysses, of sinister sentinels and mysterious documents. Egged on by Däniken's delighted interjections ("I can't believe it!"), he plied him with ever more fanciful yarns.

This, presumably, was the conversation that conjured up the "Golden Zoo" and "Metal Library" which Erich von Däniken claims to have seen two days later in a "hall" situated (according to him) 800 feet deep in Ecuadorian soil on the eastern slopes of the Cordilleras.

Of course, the emergence of this fantastic story becomes fully comprehensible only if we bear in

[1] The original German editions are *Erinnerungen an die Zukunft* (1968), *Zurück zu den Sternen* (1968), *Aussaat und Kosmos* (1972), all published by Econ-Verlag. English translations comprise: *Chariots of the Gods?*, New York, Putnam; London, Souvenir Press; *Gods from Outer Space*, Putnam; *Return to the Stars* and *The Gold of the Gods*, Souvenir Press. Bantam have published a paperback edition of *Chariots of the Gods?*

This documentary analysis of the Däniken phenomenon and the two-tape recorded interviews were prepared by the editors of *Der Spiegel* (Hamburg).

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mind that Däniken had long expected to make such a discovery—one which might, in his view, reveal the "knowledge of Creation." Now he actually "saw" something at which mysterious voices and shapes had long hinted in whispers: access to the secrets of the Universe and the genesis of humankind. He saw a library consisting of "several thousand millimetre-thin sheets of metal . . . evenly imprinted as though by a machine" and written "several thousand years" ago for the people of the space age by a "great Unknown."

In two unprecedentedly successful books, *Chariots of the Gods?* and *Return to the Stars*, the many-talented Swiss hotelier had already submitted known facts to fresh and fanciful reinterpretation. Under his pen, the writings of the Biblical prophets, the books of Tibetan Lamas, the stone relics of the Maya and Inca, the cave-drawings of North Africa and the Easter Island statues had become transformed into the "Thousand and One Nights" of the space age.

On 6 March 1972, however, Däniken crossed the hitherto inviolate frontiers of his half-whimsical, half-stimulating realm of imagination. The story-teller was transmogrified into a prophet. He had "seen"—although Móricz insists: "We never showed him those things." Like Moses descending from Sinai, Däniken emerged from his mysterious cavern armed with the new commandments of a cosmic order.

CHAGRIN WAS IN STORE for anyone who supposed that this transition from best-selling author to visionary, more comical than worthy of serious consideration, would produce a down-turn in the incredible success curve of Däniken's books. Still climbing steadily, his sales already exceed nine million (world total) and may soon top the ten-million mark.

ERICH VON DÄNIKEN'S irresistible ascent has long ceased to be a literary or personal phenomenon and become a pointer to the present condition of a technological society whose horizon of knowledge and research is extending ever deeper into the macro- and micro-space of the Universe—whose craving for meaning, for the great key to the secret of life, grows fiercer every day.

Overgrown with commercialism and scandal, enmeshed in tissues of lies and pathological notions, scrutinised by psychologists and sociologists and manipulated by shrewd PR men and ghost-writers, Däniken's successes tell us less about himself than about the societies which, Capitalist and Communist alike, gobble up his books and films in such unimaginable numbers. They exert a fascination on Germans and Czechs, Russians and Americans—even, more recently, on Mao's "blue ants."

Five months after the Sinai episode in the Cordilleras, four years after *Chariots of the Gods?* and three years after *Return to the Stars*, there appeared the third and "golden" Däniken (publisher's blurb), namely *Gold of the Gods*, an account of the author's claimed experiences in the caves of Ecuador. Published last summer in a first edition of 100,000 copies, the book took only six weeks to reach first place on *Der Spiegel's* best-seller list. Another 50,000 copies were printed a mere fortnight later, and by early March of this year Econ-Verlag of Düsseldorf had recorded total (German) sales of 300,000.

DÄNIKEN DEVOTES just twelve out of the book's 288 pages to his alleged cave-journey via a secret entrance beside the Rio Santiago in Morona Santiago Province, in the Gualaquiza—San Antonio—Yaupi triangle on the eastern slopes of the Cordilleras de los Andes.

The downward trip was by ropeway. "Helmet lamps and torches" blazed forth as Däniken reached the bottom. He "burst out laughing" and "felt tremendously happy," he says, as his "doubts vanished as if by magic." But he experienced "the feeling of being constantly watched."

He saw gold—a whole menagerie of golden creatures: saurians, elephants, camels, bears, monkeys, snails and crabs. In a "nameless hall" the size of three football fields he saw a "table and seven chairs." He also saw "the library," written many thousand years before on thin sheets of metal "so as to remain legible in perpetuity": the *"Biblioteca metálica"*, as Móricz calls it.

In this "library," so Däniken believes, visitors from other planets many thousands of years ago left behind the "cosmic plan" or true story of Creation, a potential key to the development of human intelligence. Equipped with this find, he proposes to "completely overthrow the dubious world order" and write *finis* to Christianity and to religions in general. Faith is *passé* now that the "knowledge of Creation" can at last be revealed.

Four months after the publication of his book, Däniken admitted to two *Spiegel* editors in the small conference room of the Holiday Inn Hotel at Innsbruck that he had never been to the part of Ecuador he mentions. He had merely spent six hours below ground near the town of Cuenca, 100 kilometres from the "secret" entrance. He further conceded that he could never have

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reached the said area by jeep in 24 hours, as he had recounted.

He did, however, stick doggedly to his story of the hall, the golden zoo, and the metal library. To him, this hall with its "sacred book" is the site of a cosmic revelation, the fixed point of his faith, the "womb" in which he hankers to take refuge, the catacomb into which no one can follow him.

IS ERICH VON DÄNIKEN a charlatan? Or is he, to quote Robert Neumann, one of those "paranoid dreamers who become, according to fate or fortune, leaders or prophets, saints, martyrs, or clairvoyants"? Or is he "the most important and brilliant satirist in German literature for at least a century", as the geologist Professor Wunderlich (author of *Wohin der Stier Europa Trug*) avers? Or, finally, is he a mere plagiarist of the *Sci-Fi* genre?

In any event, what accounts for Däniken's success? Shrewd management, skilful promotion by an experienced publisher, a lavish advertising campaign? Nothing points in that direction.

In spring 1967, when Däniken submitted *Chariots of the Gods?* to the readers of Econ-Verlag, Düsseldorf, their verdict was unanimously unfavourable. "The work of an emotional non-writer," declared Erwin Barth von Wehrenalp, the firm's chief.

Wehrenalp was slow to become infected by Däniken's obsession. Unimpressed by the author's routine assertion that *Chariots?* would become an "international best-seller" on the lines of Werner Keller's *The Bible as History* (world sales 7.5 million, also published by Econ), he sent Däniken's first-born somewhat joylessly on its way in an edition of 6,000 copies.

What he did do was have the book rewritten by Wilhelm Utermann of Roggersdorf (near Munich), whose experience as a script-writer and film producer during the 1950s had familiarised him with public taste. If Utermann (alias Roggersdorf) had not "re-vamped every last sentence"—as Däniken scoffed to his publisher—the manuscript would never have been fit for publication at all.

The unenthusiastic publisher received his first shock from Switzerland, where Zurich's *Weltwoche* started to serialise the book early in March 1968, two days after German publication. The Swiss palate was tickled by these weekly gobbets. Still hesitantly, Econ followed suit with two further printings in March, first of 6,000, then 8,000, and a further 6,000 in April. It finally dawned on the puzzled Düsseldorfers that they had struck pay-dirt in Switzerland. Like an epidemic, "Däniken" (as it was called by the *Handelsblatt*) spread northwards into West Germany. Däniken's *Chariots?* first appeared in the *Spiegel* best-seller list on 22 July 1968. 9 December 1968 saw it leading the field. By the end of 1968 Econ had printed 171,000 copies of Däniken's book without having pushed it at all save for a few advertisements in the *Börsenblatt* and two modest posters.

THIS MUCH IS certain. Däniken's success was not the product of subtle management—it was more like a natural cataclysm. A flood of readers' letters (17,000 to date) poured into Econ's offices, although many reviewers had received the miraculous book-phenomenon with gentle mockery and most with criticism.

Nonetheless, the "fairy-tale book for adults" (as it was called by Radio Hesse) was on the verge of breaking every record in the publishing world. By the beginning of March, Wehrenalp had notched up total German sales of 1.2 million copies including book-club and paperback editions; also world sales of more than 5.5 million copies. The English-language edition reached the 3.4 million mark; and 235,000 copies were sold in Brazil alone. *Chariots of the Gods?* has been translated into 26 languages, among them Bengali, Marathi, Canarese, Malayalam, Hebrew and Chinese.

The left-wing periodical *Konkret* called "*Dänikitis*" a "crisis of the declining bourgeoisie," but even this dialectical theory was outpaced by the Däniken boom. 400,000 Czechs and Slovaks devoured the book with as much voracity as the exploited victims of the capitalist system. Chinese publishing outlets are distributing *Chariots of the Gods?*—albeit in unknown numbers—just like those of Israel, Yugoslavia, or India.

DÄNIKEN'S SUBSEQUENT BOOKS followed smoothly in the wake of his trail-blazer. *Return to the Stars* has so far sold 850,000 copies in Germany and two million abroad. Econ has assigned 14 licences for Däniken's third offering (*Aussaat und Kosmos*).

In 1969 Terra Filmkunst GmbH made a documemory based on *Chariots?* This has run in most of the world's countries and capitals—Moscow and Warsaw included—and won applause after each performance. Early in January of this year, CBS televised an abridged version of the film. 350,000 of Däniken's books were ordered from New York's Bantam publishing company within the next 24 hours. Däniken's lecture tours, arranged by Zurich's Tourneetheater, have so far attracted more than 100,000 of the faithful and inquisitive. Hamburg University's *Auditorium Maximum* (capacity 1,800) was swamped, and upwards of 500 people had to go home without

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the opportunity of hearing Däniken speak. An hour before he was due to lecture at Innsbruck's big municipal hall, all that remained was standing room at 20 schillings a head.

Nothing could quell the Däniken craze, not even scientifically-based criticism of the sort levelled by Ernst von Khuon in *Waren die Götter Astronauten?* (Were the Gods Astronauts?); by Gerhard Gadow of the Berlin Technical University in his Fischer paperback *Erinnerungen an die Wirklichkeit* (Recollections of Reality, a jibe at Recollections of the Future, the German title of *Chariots?*); by archaeologist Joachim Rehork in *Faszinierende Funde* (Fascinating Discoveries); or by Pieter Coll in *Geschäfte mit der Phantasie* (roughly, Making Money out of Imagination). Story-teller Däniken's success remained proof against TV exposés and charges of plagiarism alike.

Others sought to cure *Dänikitis* with sarcasm or profundity. "In an age rendered uncertain by science," wrote *Die Zeit*, "people again have something to cling to: a simple doctrine." The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* made this comment on Däniken and his success: "This man, who dwells on the frontiers of reality, is becoming the prophet of a 'new science' in which it is faith that counts, not proof."

The Bible—a Report on Astronauts

THE DÄNIKEN DISCIPLE must, in fact, subscribe to the following articles of faith:

(1) alien beings from a distant galaxy visited the earth about 10,000 years ago, possibly after an intergalactic battle;

(2) these "sons of the stars" created "intelligent man" by altering the genes of monkeys "in their image";

(3) the alien astronauts were "worshipped as gods" by mankind because of their unfathomable technology;

(4) many hitherto unidentified archaeological finds may be relics of the astronauts' visit;

(5) myths, the Bible, and other "sacred books" are really accounts of the sojourn on earth of these "gods".

Wherever Däniken opens the Bible he sees allusions to the astronaut-gods. Moses kept in constant touch with a divine space-ship by means of the Ark of the Covenant—in reality, a two-way transmitter which he built to the gods' specifications. Däniken asserts that the sinful cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by a "divine" atomic bomb, and that the Book of

Däniken & Extra-sensory Perception: an Interview (I)

—Herr von Däniken, how did you actually come to know about the astronauts?
DÄNIKEN: **Imagination certainly had something to do with it.**

—Is there also a connection with the private process of perception which you have referred to as "ESPing"? What does ESP really mean?
DÄNIKEN: **It comes from the English and is short for extra-sensory perception. But that belongs to my own private and intimate sphere, so to speak. It's something I prefer not to discuss.**

—But ESPing is part of the "Phantasie" you value as a creative element.
DÄNIKEN: **Yes.**

—Can you place your first ESP experience?
DÄNIKEN: **It occurred almost exactly 18 years ago.**

—And this single experience convinced you that astronauts from other planets. . . .
DÄNIKEN: **In my opinion, from other galaxies or solar systems. . . .**

—. . . so your youthful experience at Fribourg was crucial to that insight?
DÄNIKEN: **Correct.**

—Your ESP experience of that date, did it firmly convince you that alien astronauts had landed on earth?
DÄNIKEN: **I wasn't sure to begin with. After all, I'd undergone an extremely unusual experience—but please, I'd prefer not to talk about it.**

—But you yourself have written about it.
DÄNIKEN: **Econ-Verlag published extracts from the diary I kept in prison at Vienna. There was something in it about ESPing, also the fact that I know how I'll meet my death.**

—And when?
DÄNIKEN: **No, not that, though it might be possible. I don't want to know, that's all. As a matter of interest, I knew my book would be a huge success long before its publication. I even predicted the extent of its sales.**

—So ESP is a major source of your knowledge?
DÄNIKEN: **A source which led me to the firm belief that the earth had been visited by extra-terrestrial astronauts. I know this. I also know that an event will take place in the near future which will prove I'm right.**

—Can you describe your ESP experiences in more detail?
DÄNIKEN: **One makes a sort of "journey through time." I step out of time, so I stand outside time and see everything simultaneously—past, present, and future. I hold conversations.**

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Ezekiel is an account of landings by alien astronauts—a theory which has even kindled the scientific imagination of one NASA engineer.

Däniken deals similarly with the Sumerian "Epic of Gilgamesh," which in his view recounts a trip to the space centre of the "gods", with the legend of the Sumerian king Etana's "flight into the sky." The *Popol Vuh* (Book of Counsel) of the Quiché Maya he interprets as an account of an intergalactic battle in which the losers took refuge on earth and allegedly built the Ecuadorian tunnel system.

Explorer in the World Caves:

JUAN MÓRICZ, *whom Erich von Däniken cites as the main witness of his alleged subterranean adventure in Ecuador, was born 50 years ago at Szombathely in Hungary. He emigrated to Argentina in 1950 and has lived in Ecuador since 1967. This small Andean country was once, so the explorer claims, "the cultural centre of the world." Civilisation spread from there across the Pacific,* via *India and Mesopotamia, to Europe. Dubious comparisons between Hungarian and many Indio dialects convinced ex-Hungarian Móricz that Magyar was "the mother-tongue of America." He went on to flabbergast the Ecuadorians by asserting that their country is traversed by an artificial tunnel system containing archaeological treasures—the same caves and archaeological treasures which Erich von Däniken claims to have seen.*

In 1969 Móricz did, in fact, lead a 17-man expedition through the jungle bordering the Rio Santiago in Ecuador's eastern province to the Cuevas de los Tayos, which Móricz roughly translates (into Hungarian) as "Caves of the High Priest." A two-day tour of inspection yielded stalagmites, stalactites, and mountains of bird-droppings—but no treasures.

Local authorities, such as engineer Agustin Paladines of the National Directorate of Geology and Mining, state unequivocally that the Cuevas de los Tayos—and other caves in the Ecuadorian Oriente—are situated in white limestone formations and are "definitely of natural origin." Father Porras, Professor of Archaeology at the Catholic University of Quito, has explored at least a dozen caves in the east of Ecuador during the past 25 years, but nowhere below ground did he discover signs of human handiwork: "Absolutely nothing, no worked stone, no wall paintings, no fragments of pottery, not even traces of smoke. . . ." Quito's Archaeological Museum contains not a single piece found in the limestone caves of the Oriente.

Museum director Crespo Toral has vainly offered to place his museum at Juan Móricz's disposal if only he will produce the legendary metal tomes and gold animals. US film-producer James Mobley, who is planning a documentary about the caves, has been equally unsuccessful in persuading the explorer to divulge the whereabouts of his alleged cache. Móricz demanded $50,000 plus $1,000 a day—and even then he refused.

He obviously hopes to extract money from Erich von Däniken at smaller personal risk. Peña, his legal adviser, is threatening to instruct a German lawyer if Däniken declines "to reach an amicable settlement and pay the share to which Móricz is entitled in respect of the commercial exploitation of his name, the photographs, research, theories, items of information and other rights . . . in your book Aussaat und Kosmos."

—Erich von Däniken claims in his latest book to have accompanied you into a mysterious cave system in Ecuador.

MÓRICZ: **Däniken never set foot in the caves, not unless he did so in a flying saucer.**

—He says you actually showed him a prehistoric library engraved on sheets of metal, a whole menagerie of gold animals, and a hall with a table surrounded by chairs.

MÓRICZ: **If he says he personally saw the library and the other things, he's lying. It's a downright disgrace. We never showed him those things. He's even fiddled the photos. The picture on page 15 of his book *Aussaat und Kosmos* was taken during our 1969 expedition—it shows a cave entrance eroded by water. As for the amulet on page 20, I didn't find it in a cave, as he claims.**

—In that case, how do you explain his assertions?

MÓRICZ: **It was me who told him everything. He pumped me for hours on end. He lapped it up. He even broached the possibility of a $200,000 cave expedition.**

—Why didn't it come off?

MÓRICZ: **He didn't have the time. An expedition to the caves of eastern Ecuador would have taken at least a fortnight, but he was only here for about a week.**

—So instead you guided him to a side entrance into the cave world, as Däniken calls it?

MÓRICZ: **Yes, we took him on a two-day trip to Cuenca and showed him one of the many cave entrances in the vicinity. You couldn't enter the cave, though, it's blocked.**

—While you were in Cuenca you showed him Father Crespi's collection. Didn't you warn him that many of the pieces weren't authentic?

MÓRICZ: **Sure, we told him that Crespi had collected plenty of valuable stuff at one time, but the genuine pieces are buried under a load of trash. The two rooms are piled high, but most of the contents are junk. Just the same, Däniken insisted on photographing it all. The man's out of his mind. He clicked away from 10 a.m. till 3 p.m., and it wasn't the genuine pieces he illustrated in his book—far from it, in my opinion.**

—Däniken visited Ecuador a second time in August of last year. For what purpose?

MÓRICZ: **It was only a brief visit—just two or three days. I think he intended to come and confess all, but he never did. Instead, he invited me and my lawyer, Dr Pena Matheus, to attend the launching of his book**

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OF COURSE, SIMILAR or even identical claims were made before the advent of Däniken by other writers, *e.g.* scientist Jacques Bergier and philosopher Louis Pauwels in 1960 and Robert Charroux in 1963, though the German edition of Charroux's book sold only a paltry 58,000 copies.

None of this helps to explain the "Erich von Däniken phenomenon." Why should fortune have smiled on Däniken rather than Pauwels-Bergier or Charroux and the rest? Why have his

an Interview (II)

at the Frankfurt Book Fair, presumably so that we could back him up. Herr Däniken must have taken us for semi-savages who are too stupid to exploit what we know for our own benefit.

—Were you already aware that Däniken was passing off your accounts as his personal experiences?
MÓRICZ: **He didn't bring his book along, just read us a few passages from some galley-proofs. He'd undertaken to do no more than allude to my discoveries and to a book which I intend to write myself. The caves really exist, after all.**

—You claim that a system of tunnels hundreds of kilometres long extends under the Andes from Ecaudor to Peru and Bolivia . . . .
MÓRICZ: **Yes. For instance, caves lead from Cuzco, the ancient Inca capital in Peru, to Bolivia—even to the sea.**

—Have you been through all these caves in person?
MÓRICZ: **No, but I've seen the entrances. I base my assertions on the mythology. . . .**

—Did these tunnels originate in a natural way?
MÓRICZ: **Many of them were created by erosion, others were dug out.**

—Who could have performed such a gigantic feat, the Inca or extra-terrestrial beings of the sort referred to by Däniken?
MÓRICZ: **Quechua mythology tells of a beetle which dug the caves. During our 1969 expedition, which was sponsored by the Ecuadorian tourist organisation *Ceturis*, we actually discovered an artificial cave in the Cuevas de los Tayos, beside the Rio Santiago. After crawling through an eroded passage, we suddenly found ourselves in a huge chamber at least 250 feet high. The walls were smooth, as though polished, and there were steps in the floor.**

—Is that where you discovered the library?
MÓRICZ: **No, that's in another cave about 30 kilometres away.**

—Did you reach it on your 1969 expedition?
MÓRICZ: **No, we ran out of supplies.**

—When did you first see the library?
MÓRICZ: **I can't tell you that, or someone might trace where I was at the relevant time.**

—How did you come to discover the library?
MÓRICZ: **Someone guided me there.**

—Who?
MÓRICZ: **I can't say.**

—Is the Golden Zoo in the same chamber as the library?
MÓRICZ: **It isn't really a zoo, just faithful representations of plants and animals of the sort that once existed in the imperial gardens of Cuzco, according to the chronicles of the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega. What's more, I don't know if they're pure gold—they may only be gilded.**

—Did you count the sheets in the metal library, and are the dimensions given by Däniken—96 x 48 centimetres—correct?
MÓRICZ: **No, I can't say how many there were, and I wasn't carrying a tape-measure.**

—In your opinion, what sort of script could the characters on the sheets be?
MÓRICZ: **It's very probable that the characters on the sheets stem from civilisations that existed in vanished Atlantis.**

—Were you able to decipher them?
MÓRICZ: **They're probably decipherable, but I was only there a short time.**

—In that case, how do you know—as you allege in your written statement to the notary Gustavo Falconi—that these sheets contain a "chronological record of human history"?
MÓRICZ: **I was told so by my guide.**

—Why didn't you bring at least one sheet back with you as evidence?
MÓRICZ: **It would have meant certain death. The custodians of these treasures don't let anyone cart them away.**

—Are they wild Jívaro Indians?
MÓRICZ: **No, they're very good-natured people. A tribe called the Bélas.**

—But nobody has ever heard of an Indio tribe by that name.
MÓRICZ: **They're superior types—white Indios with pale eyes. If anyone gets that far, they force him to stay with them for good.**

—How did you manage to return?
MÓRICZ: **They make exceptions.**

—An expedition might clear up the mystery surrounding these treasures. Econ-Verlag have announced their intention of sending various experts into the caves.
MÓRICZ: **They never wrote to me. I only heard from Däniken, who says he plans to be here for an expedition with a camera team and scientists. I may or may not take part, depending on terms. It really doesn't do to kindle an argument with lies and then fan the flames with an expedition for the sake of continued profits.**

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numerous successors fallen by the way, *e.g.* Peter Kolosimo (28,000 copies), Karl F. Kohlenberg (20,000) and Eric Norman (42,000)?

Is Däniken the "paranoid dreamer" Robert Neumann considers him to be? May not the reason for his success be that society itself has paranoid features—a state of affairs described by Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno in their study of the *Dialectics of Enlightenment*: "In society itself, the element of paranoia appeals to the paranoiacs . . . to which they are grateful"? On this interpretation, the "Däniken problem" is simply the affinity between a paranoid environment and a paranoiac, and the secret of Däniken's success reposes partly in the state of society and partly in the personality of Däniken himself.

"ERICH always was a bit of an adventurer." Thus Otto von Däniken on his brother, born at Zofingen in the Swiss canton of Aargau on 14 April 1935. His mother found him "not a difficult child . . . easy to bring up, and no trouble at school." Däniken, who has long worn shoes with built-up heels, sought to compensate for his small stature by displaying exceptional drive and energy. He was the "ideas man" in games and school-boy escapades, the leader when it came to tests of courage.

One youthful experience remained embedded in his memory, never to relax its grip on his imagination. In February 1944 he saw an American bomber make a forced landing on Swiss soil. The huge, sinister-looking machine disgorged eight men who walked mutely past him "like creatures from another world"—from another planet.

This incident seems to typify Däniken's mode of experience and perception. His senses and sensibility are involved with the massive and menacing, the uncanny and archaic, and the impressions he receives at such moments become so crystallised that they confirm him in an existing system of belief. He himself describes these lightning flashes of intuition in his books. Flying over the Nazca valley in Peru—to take one example—he looks down at the geometrically arranged lines and outlines of vast animal shapes and is suddenly confronted by the space centre of his "gods." He examines Saharan cave-drawings, or the huge statues on Easter Island, and identifies the figures of extra-terrestrial astronauts.

Euphoria pervades him at such times, compulsive laughter overwhelms him, and he plunges feverishly into the tasks of measurement, photography, and interpretation. As for the things that are suddenly illuminated in this somewhat inscrutable manner, details matter less than the corroborative value of his "discoveries." To him, the base metal and brass which he finds at the rear of Father Crespi's church, the Maria Auxiliadora in Cuenca, are gold—real gold, subjectively and momentarily speaking. Däniken is no deceiver. On the other hand, he is quite capable of dismissing allusions to the less-than-precious metal of which his finds consisted, airily and with no fears for his own credibility: "I don't care if it's gold or not. Only the engraved characters count."

Däniken claims to have been 800 feet below ground. On his own admission, he was never there. He claims to have visited the caves beside the Rio Santiago. On his own admission, he didn't. He does, however, claim to have penetrated the great chamber by a side entrance roughly 100 kilometres from the one he originally mentioned, heedless of the fact that access to the "hall" would have entailed a subterranean journey of 100 kilometres.

Did he see the golden animals in the "hall"? He did—subjectively, of course, His perceptions are the fruit of cross-fertilisation between his system of belief in the existence of extra-terrestrial astronauts and details which are arbitrary in the extreme but always fraught with a kind of tension and mystery.

These blinding flashes of inspiration shield him against dissent and doubt—even against ridicule. Roggersdorf garnished Däniken's account of his subterranean trip with a special lighting effect. He made Däniken relate how his guide—Juan Móricz—ordered the torches to be extinguished before entering the hall so that they could all be switched on at once. Although this never happened, Däniken raised no objection. On the contrary, he expressly approved the embellishment.

From Jesus to the Astronauts

WHERE DOES THE EXPLANATION lie? Däniken is dominated by the compulsive notion of a stable—indeed, rigid—cosmic system. In 1970, while consigned to the penitentiary at Regensdorf after being sentenced by a court for embezzlement, he wrote a short story for the prison magazine in which he pictured an omniscient being endowed with knowledge of the past and future and nicknamed "BIOCO" (short for Biotronic Computer)—in other words, a machine in which all the certainty of the Universe reposes: Jehovah in the guise of a computer. The main function of this apparatus was to pass judgment, unerringly and with lightning speed, in all cases of criminal and civil law. What his story described was a Just God, though in the shape of an inanimate machine. The Universe—as he himself has

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said—is like a clockwork motor, a huge apparatus. What matters is to plumb its secret.

Clearly, Däniken's innermost motivation is fear of an uncertain and thus sinister world. His ability to captivate and even bewitch his readers probably stems from the fact that, driven by his own mental compulsion, he offers them order where none exists. He himself puts it this way: "Another major reason for the success of my books is religious uncertainty." The religious uncertainty that prevails in the world at large is congruent with that of Erich von Däniken.

Aged 14 in spring 1949, Däniken was sent by his devoutly Catholic father to the former Jesuit College of Saint-Michel at Fribourg. His schoolfriends remember him as a "mentally over-active type," "always a trifle too quick off the mark, perhaps," "exceptionally well read" and "restless to the core." His hobbies were Jazz and Astronomy.

Brought up to believe in the precepts of the Catholic Church, he fell prey to religious doubts which sparked off a mental crisis of obvious magnitude. It may be that, as an outcast from religious certainty, he sought new contacts. The members of his Scout troop remember him for his paternal solicitude and a "readiness to help which verged on self-sacrifice."

It was this "readiness to help" which prompted him to commit his first criminal act. To help a friend's mother, he dipped into Scout funds and covered the deficit with a further theft. He was arrested and later sentenced by Obwalden cantonal court to four months' imprisonment plus probation (just as Karl May, the great German "Wild West" fabulist, was jailed as a student teacher for collecting wax stubs from candlesticks in order to make Christmas candles).

Däniken's conversion from the faith of Jesus to that of the astronauts began with a vision—or a process of extra-sensory perception—which he subsequently christened *Espern*, a German verbalisation of the initials ESP. Däniken now submits that it was his first ESP experience in spring 1954 which convinced him of a prehistoric earth-landing by astronauts from outer space. From then on, he was enabled, in fact impelled, to go in search of the traces left by his gods.

He himself describes "ESPing" as a sort of journey through time. He "steps out of time" and sees "everything simultaneously—past, present and future." He converses with "people from the past" who possess the "same faculty" as he does; he knows the date of his next book and the manner of his own death.

"Diffuse identification experiences," as psychologists term them, have been closely studied in recent years by the parapsychologists J. B. Rhine and Hans Bender of Freiburg, but no scientifically adequate explanation of their occurrence has so far been advanced. Psychiatrists classify such hallucinations under the heading of paranoid schizophrenia. It is part of this clinical picture that the patient hears "voices", has the sensation of being "watched", and feels "peculiar."

IN SUMMER 1954 Däniken left school and became a hotel trainee at the *Schweizerhof* in Berne. Däniken atoned for this social come-down by studying in his room. He made it his aim to outstrip and humiliate the world of religion and erudition that had rejected him. He read books on astronomy and archaeology, returning ever and

Die Zeit

"Herr von Däniken, we've just received a new manuscript which unfortunately does not confirm your theory . . . ."

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again to myths, sagas and the Bible. "Somnambulistically, his memory soaked up anything connected with his subject," says Roggersdorf. "He was completely obsessed with his idea." Overnight, Däniken threw up his traineeship and travelled to Egypt. He had to see the Pyramids and the Sphinx—things of which he had only read in books.

Where did the money come from? The slim chestnut-haired youngster acquired it little by little from Monsieur Jacques, his boss at the *Schweizerhof*. Furthermore, a doctor friend had entrusted him with a diamond-studded bracelet and earrings which an Egyptian woman had left as security for a loan. Däniken was to collect the debt in Alexandria.

He returned with neither money nor jewellery. The result: 16 months' imprisonment and a renewed attack of wanderlust. More jobs followed at Ascot and at Davos, as a ship's steward on the Rotterdam-New York run, as a barman at the *Grand Hotel Rigi-Kaltbad*, as an unskilled worker at the Knorr soup factory, as a head waiter in Canada, and finally as a silent partner and manager of the *Hotel Rosenhügel* in Davos.

Visitors to the *Rosenhügel* were spellbound by their feverishly talkative host. He was "like an explosive charge—something was bursting inside him" is the description given by François Auberson, financial director of the Zurich branch of TWA. "He never let a day go by without whispering 'his message' in someone's ear." When the hotel guests were in bed he worked on his manuscript till four in the morning, tormented by "frightful pressure in the neck, also headaches."

To quote Max Zürcher, a television journalist: "He was so obsessed with his scheme that he brushed all obstacles aside, even if it meant incurring debts." By 1965 his debts amounted to 74,000 Swiss francs but his wanderlust was greater than ever. He hurried to Egypt a second time, then to the Lebanon, then to North and South America, searching for his astronauts with the aid of more borrowed money. "His feet were beginning to stick in the mud," Auberson recalls, "but his head was in the clouds."

Däniken's indebtedness now stood at 142,000 francs, but the manuscript of *Chariots of the Gods?* was finished. He had kept the promise embodied in a letter to a friend in 1963: "If I am confirmed in my views, I won't confine myself to lecturing my own kind. It will then be my lifelong duty to make those views intelligible to others as well. . . ."

His "lifelong duty" cost him 500,000 francs' worth of debts and three-and-a-half years' penal servitude for repeated and persistent embezzlement, repeated fraud committed for gain, and repeated and persistent forgery—yet another resemblance to the imaginative Karl May, who was consigned to Waldheim prison for fraud.

The sentence was a tough one. Däniken had already hit the jack-pot by the time it was imposed, so his debts were settled. Royalties and rights had earned him DM 1,250,000. *Chariots of the Gods?* and *Return to the Stars* were selling better than ever.

Science & Fiction

DÄNIKEN'S FIRST BOOK came out at an opportune moment, and this contributed to its success. Preparations for Apollo 8, which was to circle the moon, began in August 1968. In December, millions of television viewers saw a luminous disc on their screens for the first time: the earth televised from outer space. Space travel had begun, and with it the eruption of icy cosmic distance into human life. "The human being on our little earth," a poet has written, "felt more lonely than ever." Could that be why he yearned for "brothers and sisters in the Universe"?

Leading U.S. astronomers and astrophysicists concluded at a Green Bank symposium in 1962 that as many as 50 million civilisations were conceivable in our galaxy alone. Barely eighteen months later, Russian space scientists reached a similar conclusion at Erivan. It is not a very big step from such estimates to the hypothesis that alien intelligences many millennia ago had attained a technological standard sufficient to enable them to reach the earth. The possibility that inhabitants of other planets visited the earth several thousand years ago "is now widely accepted," asserts Ernst Stuhlinger, NASA's Associate Director of Science, and Werher von Braun would "not dispute" the same possibility. Addressing the annual conference of the American Astronautical Society in 1966, Professor Carl Sagen stated that our tiny corner of the Universe could have been visited thousands of times in the past few billion years, and that at least one such visit may have occurred in historical times.

There is no evidence, of course, either for myriads of civilised planets or for visits to the earth by alien astronauts, or for Däniken's alleged creation of human life, whether deliberate or fortuitous, by cosmic space-travellers. Däniken's realm of fancy lies in the twilight zone between the scientifically conceivable and a cowed humanity's craving for absolute certainty. Ten years before Däniken produced his colourful assertions, the psychologist and philosopher Carl Gustav Jung sought to analyse a phenomenon akin to *"Dänikitis"*, namely *"Ufology,"* or the belief in unidentified flying objects of extra-

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terrestrial origin.[2] Jung came to the conclusion that "imaginative impulses of this kind, notably when they occur in so serious a form, derive from a latent and ulterior cause, to wit, vital necessity and a corresponding desire. . . ."

TECHNOLOGY, whether it takes the form of an omni-destructive hydrogen bomb, an air-polluting car or jet aircraft, or the contamination of rivers and seas by industrial waste, is a threat to man's environment. He is therefore seeking to "escape the prison" which, in the long or short term, will be swamped by the avalanche of population growth. Hence escapism, and the flight from ugly reality into the world of science fiction—not a symptom of "capitalist decadence," to be sure, but a problem of orientation which besets post-religious society in general.

The world is becoming crowded and dirty, even indeed where Mao and Brezhnev hold sway. No Marx or Lenin, no Son of Man appears capable of halting this process. Help, as Jung put it, is therefore "sought in the extra-terrestrial domain, since the earth does not provide it." One can, Jung said, observe with reference to the belief in UFOS "how, at a dark and difficult period in human history, there takes shape the miraculous story of exploratory settlement or at least of an approach by extra-terrestrial 'heavenly' powers."

Yet the destruction of religious ideas of the cosmos cannot simply be offset by the substitution of science for religion. Science, in the view of the sceptical philosopher Arnold Gehlen, cannot assuage "the primary and instinctively operating need to interpret and explain, the need to impart meaning or to discover it. . . ." It may therefore be that, where meaning ceases to exist, "secondary meaning" takes root and paranoia flourishes. It may also be that special antennae are developed by sensitive people who cannot endure the condition of meaninglessness and transform it into a hectic quest for the key secret that will explain all—Däniken's *Biblioteca metálica*, for example.

Däniken is defenceless against his own scheme of things—defenceless, too, against those who seek to exploit, control and delude him with the aid of his own hallucinations. Central to the Däniken story, therefore, is the beggar's opera staged by Argentine adventurer Juan Móricz.

Doubtless Móricz has no more set eyes on the Golden Zoo and the *Biblioteca metálica* than Däniken. Unlike Däniken, however, Móricz has probably never believed in its existence. Hernan Crespo Toral, director of Quito's Archaeological Institute, calls him "a fraud and adventurer," and even the aged Father Crespi sums him up with a contemptuous snort: "Profiteer!" The legend of the Golden Zoo, complete with trimmings, antedates Juan Móricz's little vaudeville. They say it was first recounted 30 years ago by a deranged army captain named Jaramillo.

Däniken's publisher, Barth von Wehrenalp, continues to back his author bravely, unstinting of money and effort. Financed by Econ, Bonn University specialist in Latin American studies, Professor Oberem, is scheduled this year to elucidate the mystery of the caves—the mystery that never was but continues to be a remunerative illusion. For Erich von Däniken it was worth a million.

[2] C. G. Jung, *Flying Saucers* (1958).

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Michael Shanks

Can Capitalism Survive?

THE GROWTH DEBATE in Britain has acquired a new complexity in the last few years—a complexity well-illustrated by E. J. Mishan's fascinating article, "To Grow or Not to Grow", in the May ENCOUNTER. Three questions are now intertwined in the debate. First, the perennial question of what it is in the nature of British society and the economy which prevents us from growing as fast as other nations. This aspect of the debate assumes automatically that growth is a good thing. Superimposed on this issue, however, is the second—more recent—question of whether a faster rate of growth would in fact produce a more desirable society. And this leads naturally to the third, most fundamental, question of what kind of society we should be seeking anyway (a question which, I hope to show, is in fact linked to the first).

This is indeed the main element in Mishan's article—an eloquent, highly subjective value-judgment on the kind of life and the kind of society which he personally would find most agreeable. This judgment has nothing to do with economics. It must be accorded the respect due to the opinions of any civilised man who has the ability to express them with eloquence and sincerity—no more, no less. *De gustibus non est disputandum.* Like Mishan, I find aspects of modern society distasteful. I do not believe that these distasteful aspects are due to growth *per se*, but rather to a combination of misdirected growth and inadequate growth. I do not personally share his "abiding scepticism in all that concerns the future." But then—so what? The personal social preferences of Mishan and myself are not perhaps the central issue. The future will happen whether either of us likes it or not. The responsible citizen will be concerned to do what he can to make it as secure and agreeable for his children as possible. If a "no-growth society" is a possible option, it is up to the Club of Rome and its followers to tell us how.

Let me state briefly my own position on the second question I have posed, which in my view is the least interesting of the three. I regard it as the least interesting because it seems to me meaningless to abstract *rates* of growth from *patterns* of growth. It seems to me blindingly obvious that people throughout the world, and not least in the U.K., *do* want a standard of living higher than they currently enjoy. Indeed, the phenomenon of cost inflation—the most dramatic and potentially the most lethal development in Western society of the last decade—is only explicable in terms of what used to be called "a revolution of rising expectations," an increasingly impatient and desperate demand for more material goods and services than the economic system can currently provide. It seems to me futile to deny that, whether we like it or not, the most powerful motive force in modern society is a rampant and increasingly frustrated materialism. The less able a society is to satisfy these demands the greater the social friction it is liable to have to face.

Growth, therefore, seems to me demonstrably to matter, more indeed than ever before. The old social restraints—provided by religion, by accepted social stratifications, by ignorance—have disappeared. In their place the mass media have inserted a belief that modern technology can provide the Good Life (defined by the images we see nightly on our TV screens) for everyone, and the stimulation of wants has acquired a sophistication and persuasiveness it never had before. The man in the street is encouraged *qua* customer to be a hedonist; it is idle therefore to expect him *qua* employee to act as a puritan. At the same time the social structure has become much more fluid, and this too has widened the horizons and heightened the ambitions of the great mass of the population.

I do not see how it is possible to remove these

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expectations once they have been aroused. Equally, however, it seems clear that the expectations have outrun by a considerable margin the ability of the economic system to satisfy them. And it is also clear, I think, that even to the extent that material demands *can* be satisfied, their satisfaction does not bring the contentment that one might have expected. So I believe that any attempt at an answer to the problem of disappointed expectations which underlies cost inflation must embrace the following aspects.

FIRST, WE MUST ACCEPT that the purpose of economic growth is to increase the range of choice of the consumer—to move him, in economic jargon, to a higher point on the utility curve. A pattern of growth which does not do this is therefore likely to be self-defeating. It is only too possible for this to happen. For example, if the accumulation of material goods can only be achieved at the cost of savage industrial discipline, frequent and disruptive movements of labour, long hours spent in uncongenial or soul-destroying working conditions, the net satisfaction of the community may be reduced. Similarly, if this production takes place at the expense of the environment or of public spending on the social infrastructure, the same result will obtain. Japan is an example of a country where the balance of the economy has been distorted in favour of the private sector. As a result the Japanese have acquired with phenomenal speed a standard of living in terms of consumer goods which equates to that of Western Europe. They have, however, a very much lower standard of housing, a severe problem of pollution, and an extremely congested road system. However—and this is the aspect of the situation which tends to be overlooked—the growth of the Japanese economy does give the authorities the room for manoeuvre to increase social spending at the expense of some slow-down in the growth of the private sector. I believe that over the next few years we will see a fairly massive shift of resources in Japan in this direction. Britain, with its slower growth rate, may not have acquired quite as many social or environmental problems as Japan, though it is perfectly clear that we have a great many. But because of our slower growth rate we have much less opportunity to improve our social infrastructure. In other words, Japan's social problems spring from a distortion of effort within a very dynamic growth economy, Britain's from a lack of resources due to a very sluggish growth rate. Japan's problems, therefore, seem to me intrinsically easier to solve, since it is easier to re-channel than to activate. And one has only to look at the way in which Britain's standard of achievement in almost every aspect of social spending has fallen behind that of continental Western Europe, compared to the relative position of fifteen or ten years ago, to see that growth rates *do* matter in terms of the resources they create for improving welfare.

There is of course a problem of statistical distortion, in that growth indices tend to overestimate the contribution of manufacturing and agriculture compared to that of services, so that a reallocation of resources in favour of "quality-of-life" expenditure may show up in the tables as a *reduction* in the rate of growth of gross national product. But this is simply to say that the GNP is an inadequate index of welfare. To the extent that they are drawing attention to this, the anti-Growth school have a valid point to make.

THE SECOND ASPECT of the anti-Growth argument —that current rates of growth are depleting natural resources at an unacceptable rate and creating *insoluble* problems of pollution—seems to me at best unproven. The balance of the argument seems so far to be against this proposition, though the Club of Rome is plainly right to draw attention to the problem.

The rest of the anti-Growth argument seems to me to boil down, as I have indicated above, to an argument—a very valid and important one—about the *patterns* of growth within a given economy, the allocation of resources, the relative weight to be given to various criteria: not only between different types of goods and services, but between work and leisure, between high rates of output and more civilised working conditions, and so on. My contention is that these problems, other things being equal, will be easier to solve the higher the standard of living and therefore the higher the underlying rate of growth within the economy.

That, it seems to me, is the first aspect from which an answer to the problems of cost inflation should be sought. It follows from this that the question of what can be done to raise the current growth rate of the British economy is still relevant, indeed more so than ever before. And I would like shortly to return to some aspects of this question which have, I believe, been inadequately studied heretofore.

But first I would like to spend a little time on what seems to me to be the second starting point

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for a solution to cost inflation. This concerns, not the satisfaction of wants, but the nature of the society within which those wants are being expressed. And here I link the first and the third questions posed at the beginning of my article.

IT SEEMS TO ME that the inflationary pressures now facing Western societies reflect not only unsatisfied material wants but also a breakdown in the traditional pattern of society—a breakdown which the inflation itself then intensifies and aggravates. In pressing their demands as they have been and are doing, sectional pressure groups (typically, but by no means exclusively, workers organised in trade unions) are in effect putting their claims above those of the community as a whole. And, by and large, they are succeeding in imposing their demands on government—only to be cheated of what they believe themselves to have won by the resulting rise in prices.

If, as seems to be happening almost everywhere, belief in the ability of governments to control these pressures is evaporating, and there is therefore a growing tendency for everyone in a position to do so to grab what he can while the going is good, then the implications for social cohesion are grim. And indeed there are clear and obvious links, I believe, between cost inflation and the growing disrespect for law and order in modern society; just as there are clear and obvious links between cost inflation and the permissive society—both phenomena reflecting the breakdown of traditional attitudes and constraints and traditional beliefs about the relationship of this life to the next. There is a clear connection between the syndromes of "*God is Dead*" and "*I Want It Now*"—and to say this is to make an observation of fact and not a moral judgment.

So it is urgently necessary, I believe, to restore faith in the stability and value of society, to recreate a "General Will" which will override the sectional interests of the different members of society. Modern society cannot, this side of the Iron Curtain (and probably not indefinitely on the far side either), be held together by force. It cannot be held together by religious beliefs. It must therefore be held together by a conscious act of will on the part of its members, a judgment that the cohesion of society is itself so important as to transcend the fissiparous instincts always present in any collection of men and women. And for this to happen people must believe that the workings of society are just.

That is why, in every Western country, there is now growing concern among politicians to promote a "Social Contract," to encourage "Participation," to "bring the workers (whether at a national or an E.E.C. level) in to the System," to "give the European Community a human face," and so on. The respect accorded throughout Europe today to Chancellor Willy Brandt—and perhaps, though in lesser degree, also to Roy Jenkins—illustrates this mood. If there is a dominant ideology in Western Europe today, it is that loose congeries of ideas and value judgments which come under the umbrella of Social Democracy. The thrusting entrepreneur, the folk-hero of the 1960s, is now under a cloud. The society he created is felt to be too brittle, too vulnerable to the assaults of the under-privileged, too expensive in social costs. What is sought instead is a consensus society, in which the wishes of all sectors are considered, in which the *distribution* of wealth—the *pattern* of growth—is considered along with its rate of increase. Increasingly, I believe, it is coming to be recognised that social justice and equality are only in the short term antithetic to growth. In the longer term they are a precondition for fast and sustainable growth.[1]

[1] Dr Mishan admits (and this is a considerable clarification of the debate) that the attempt to slow down growth in a *growth-oriented* society is unlikely to improve the quality of life. What is required is rather a conscious re-direction of the efforts of society, with the agreement (presumably) of all concerned, away from growth as an objective. Leaving aside the question-begging arrogance with which Dr Mishan (and he is by no means the only offender) equates "concern with the quality of life" with "anti-Growth", there rests the more serious objection that neither E. J. Mishan nor anybody else has begun to tell us how this mass conversion is to take place.

In default of a new religion, how are we to get the desire for greater wealth out of our system? Or is austerity to be imposed on us, by those who already have their quota of the good things of life, by measures which fall short of a consensus? And, given that conversion is unlikely to take place overnight, how do we manage the transition? Do we shrink our ambitions little by little, year by year—a kind of "n–1" policy in real terms? Nor can I believe, without more reasoned proof, that a slower growth rate will lead automatically to the elimination of poverty and a more equal distribution of income. *Pace* Mishan, I would have thought the evidence pointed in the other direction.

But, again, can we not get away from unsubstantiated value-judgments and start to examine possible quantified options—paths to lower or nil rates of growth alongside paths to faster or differently-patterned growth rates? Only when the "anti-Growth" school has advanced to this stage, it seems to me, can the debate begin to be really meaningful.

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IN THIS CONTEXT it is useful to look at the position of Britain, the conspicuous laggard in economic growth since the War (and indeed for many years before); a country which has tried unsuccessfully more than once in recent years—usually under governments which would at least claim kinship to Social Democracy—to promote voluntary policies of income restraint; a country which today has perhaps the worst labour relations (barring, possibly, Italy) of any country in Western Europe. The development of British society is painstakingly analysed in a recent symposium edited by A. H. Halsey, *Trends in British Society since 1900.*[2] Behind the usual foggy mass of statistics one sees a society becoming richer and fairer, but much more slowly than its members expect, and often in unpredicted ways; a society where the impact of change—for example through immigration or sea-changes in birth-rates—is unexpected and unplanned for.

The picture is brought more sharply into focus by a recent book by A. B. Atkinson, *Unequal Shares: Wealth in Britain,*[3] in which the point is flatly made that "as far as the distribution of wealth is concerned, Britain has the doubtful distinction of leading the international inequality league." In fact I doubt whether inequality in Britain is as pronounced as in Italy or Gaullist France, but that in itself is not very reassuring. And it is certainly true that the distribution of wealth—and therefore privilege—has in fact shown itself peculiarly resistant to legislative measures by successive governments. And that this, together with slow and chequered growth rates, has sadly soured the climate of industrial relations in the U.K., is beyond doubt.

Mr Atkinson shows convincingly that, while there has been some redistribution of wealth, it has been between members of the same families rather than between rich and poor families. Successive governments have aimed at reducing inequalities of post-tax income while largely ignoring the much more serious inequalities of wealth and power. Yet it can be plausibly argued that whereas inequalities in earned income are an essential incentive for a dynamic society, inequalities in wealth and power have precisely the opposite effect.

And so I believe that part of the reason for Britain's peculiar problems in motivating and selling "change" to its work force, which in turn have largely contributed to the slow growth rate, has been the frustrating effects of a sense of inequality and insecurity (the insecurity reflecting a felt sense of lack of power and influence within the system). Social injustice would not, I think, by itself be a sufficient reason for slow growth. Many societies manifestly less just than post-war Britain have achieved demonstrably faster growth rates. But there are two further factors. First, British democracy gives the institutions of the workers—the trades unions and, indirectly, the political arm of the Labour movement (*i.e.* the Labour Party)—power in a negative sense to block change, if not to the same degree the positive power to promote it. And, second, the frictions caused by these resistances have combined to create a sense of a society which is not only unjust but also inefficient, in its inability to generate wealth as fast as its rivals or fast enough to begin to satisfy expectations. And so we have the vicious circle of slow growth causing dissatisfaction causing industrial unrest causing slow growth.

THERE IS ANOTHER, related, special reason for Britain's poor growth performance, elaborated by Mr B. R. Cant in a recent research report for the Manchester Business School's Centre for Business Research. Mr Cant points to the persistence in Britain of the mercantilist trading tradition, in contrast to the development by our competitors of economic systems explicitly geared to industrial growth (in the formative stages usually behind protective barriers). This is reflected to this day in the different approaches to industrial financing, on which the opportunity to exploit growth opportunities largely depends. The City of London does not regard the financing of British industry as an obligation in the way that the Japanese or the French financial systems, or the German or Swedish banks, do. In Germany today 60% of industrial finance comes in the form of debt, or fixed interest financing, only 40% in the form of equity or risk capital. In Japan the proportions are 80/20. In the U.K., on the other hand, two-thirds of industry's capital is in the form of equity. This imposes a much greater constraint on the ability of British industry to grow, particularly to undertake risky ventures; and this is plainly one powerful reason for the persistently low rate of investment in post-War British industry.

The risks in the German or Japanese financial

[2] *Trends in British Society since 1900.* By A. H. HALSEY. Macmillan/St. Martin's Press, £4.95.
[3] *Unequal Shares: Wealth in Britain.* By A. B. ATKINSON. Allen Lane, £3.

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structure are that in a free market like Britain or the U.S. their companies would be peculiarly vulnerable to take-overs. But the government in each case—and indeed in most Continental countries—protects its industries from this risk by making the take-over bid, particularly by a foreign firm, quite extraordinarily difficult. The contested take-over bid as practised in the Anglo-Saxon world is indeed almost unknown elsewhere, for very good institutional reasons.

The British banking world, in short, unlike that on the Continent, in Japan or even (mainly) in North America, developed to finance trade—lending money on short term to cover the movement of goods. Elsewhere it was much more geared to the financing of industry, on long term, with (if necessary) a stake in the equity of the business as collateral. And today one sees the effect of this tradition very clearly. The City of London lends to the world. It has largely liberated itself from the effects of a stagnant industrial base. It is a genuinely international institution, to a far greater extent than the financial centres of any other industrial power (with the possible, very qualified, exception of the U.S.). At the same time British industry is under-capitalised, excessively dependent on risk capital, increasingly unable to provide the rates of return which would attract City investors. And we have indeed a steadily growing segment of "lame duck" industries, whose production is essential for national survival (or so current conventional wisdom believes) but whose profit prospects are too unexciting to interest the private investor. And so this sector must inevitably fall back on the public purse, subsisting in a limbo between the public and the private sector. (A similar situation in Mussolini's Italy led to the creation of the giant State holding company I.R.I. (*Instituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale*), and maybe we should be thinking of the same kind of industrial re-structuring, to replace the rather different kind of forced marriages within the private sector promoted by the now defunct I.R.C. (Industrial Reorganisation Corporation).

Mr Cant's thesis, essentially—and this summary inevitably does violence to the complexity and subtlety of his analysis—is that the alienation of British industry from the British financial system and indeed from the governmental and professional establishment, which is deeply rooted in our history, cannot be allowed to continue. If industry is starved of the funds it needs, it cannot satisfy the demands of the workers. And in this case the base on which the City, and British society as a whole, rests will be eroded. The process is indeed already taking place. Much as it would like to, the City cannot float itself off from the rest of Britain as a kind of offshore island. And so ways must be found of enabling more British money to find its way into British industry, even at the cost of depressing short-term rates of return.

I DO NOT FIND this thesis inconsistent with the broader one discussed earlier in the article. Indeed I think they are two strands of the same problem. The interests of industry and its workers must in the long run be identical. In the interests of its own survival industry must find ways of democratising its structure so as to increase the active participation of its workers; otherwise they are in a position to block progress. At the same time government has a dual responsibility—besides that of broadening industrial accountability to both workers and society at large. It has to see that industry is adequately funded. And it has to try to create the objective conditions for a "Social Contract" by visibly attacking the inequalities in society, while at the same time pressing forward with economic growth. These inequalities will be found to lie in the distribution of wealth and privilege rather than in the distribution of post-tax income.

No doubt all this sounds somewhat glib; and it is of course much easier to prescribe than to achieve. But what still seems to me lacking in the growth debate is a comprehensive sense of strategy, of how the differing objectives can be met and reconciled. Parts of the problem are too often thought to be the whole problem (and no doubt this analysis too falls into that trap). And what is also lacking, I find, is a sense of urgency—not *despair*, that is not lacking, but *urgency*. Democracy as we know it is unlikely to survive many years of inflation at the rates of the last few years; and the free capitalist system is likewise in danger of dying through a combination of lack of money and excessive conflict within the system. It is easy in these circumstances to despair, and so do nothing. It is easy to concentrate on attacking the symptoms, to seek short-term placebos. What is infinitely more difficult, but essential, is to review the system as a whole and to define—and then ensure—the conditions for its survival.

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Fania Pascal

Wittgenstein

A Personal Memoir

NOBODY CAN WRITE down personal memories of Wittgenstein without being almost physically aware of his disapproval and scathing glance. He often expressed his conviction that what he would like to pass for interest in other people is first and foremost malice. Yet, just as he might (though an ascetic) now and then enjoy a nice piece of cake, so have I seen him (once or twice) savour a harmless piece of gossip, against his will as it were.

He would above all abhor anybody enquiring into his personal life. This I have not done. The few facts I have found out about his relations with Francis Skinner are and were, surely, part of his public life. Besides, in my recollection the two men were inseparable.

Yet, even allowing for my lack of the experience and habit of writing, was it the consciousness of his condemnation that made me spend nearly three years on these few pages? The time went not so much in improving the material as in halting. But just as surely I would go back to it, taking it up at the sentence, at the word where I had stopped. I had a feeling that in spite of advancing years I was not in a hurry, even that my snail's pace belonged to the nature of my subject.[1]

IS WITTGENSTEIN'S stock still rising, as it was till recently? The young are certainly amazed when, if his name comes up, I say: "Oh, I taught him Russian." Anecdotes follow. A few years ago a visiting American professor carried the news home and I had an enquiry from a zealous philosopher. I answered his letter, for much the same reasons as I am writing this now, but his further enquiries brought questions such as what "textual or oral evidence" I had of Wittgenstein's attitude to Marx and Engels, or his attitude to Russia, and already my husband Roy and I were being roped into establishing a thesis. We beat a hasty retreat.

I think I should say at the outset that I know next to nothing about Wittgenstein's philosophy. Only the *Tractacus* had been published when I knew him. I tried to read it but soon abandoned the effort. My ignorance was a feather in my cap as far as Wittgenstein was concerned. In the *Philosophical Investigations* I can browse; I can read it as a collection of aphorisms. Some time in our acquaintance—and he must have been in an exceptionally amiable mood for me to ask and for him to answer patiently—I did say: "Why are you so sure your work is no earthly good to me?" He said, as far as I can remember: "Suppose you were trying to draw a chart of the progress of a hospital sister walking round her ward, then of another doing likewise on another floor, and finally, to produce *one* chart which would combine and illustrate their joint progress . . .?" I cried out: "Oh, I could never grasp it!"

One of the things that pressed upon me and prompted me to answer the American professor's letter in the first place is the absence of reference to Francis Skinner in all that is written about Wittgenstein (except that he took down some of the Notebooks at Wittgenstein's dictation). Now I knew him to have been the constant companion

[1] I found help and incentive in two books that give valuable biographical information: *Ludwig Wittgenstein, A Memoir*, by Norman Malcolm (1958), which includes a "biographical sketch" by G. H. von Wright; and *Letters from Ludwig Wittgenstein with a Memoir*, by Paul Engelmann, translated by L. Furtmüller, and edited by B. F. McGuinness (1967).

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of Wittgenstein throughout most of the 1930s, till his early death in 1941. They walked, talked, and worked together, at times sharing rooms over a small general grocer's shop. Together they came to have Russian lessons with me.

I started writing these notes in the autumn of 1969, in Canada; and on returning home I renewed contact with Francis's sister, Mrs Truscott. What I heard from her deepened my interest in everything to do with this relationship, and revived my flagging resolve to carry on with my task.

Likewise, but in a totally different way, I miss all mention of another intimate friend of Wittgenstein's, Dr Nicholas Bachtin, earlier a lecturer in Classics in Southampton, then in Birmingham where he was finally Reader in Linguistics. He died a year before Wittgenstein. When just before the War we too moved to Birmingham, where my husband was appointed to the Chair of German, it was when Wittgenstein was visiting the Bachtins (often accompanied by Skinner) that we saw him or both of them. "Wittgenstein loved Bachtin," Constance, Bachtin's widow, told me (she died in 1959 after having been for years disastrously afflicted by multiple sclerosis). From her I heard of the interminable discussions that went on between the two men, and of Wittgenstein's idiosyncrasies.

Nicholas Bachtin, an exile from the Russian Revolution but by the outbreak of the second World War a fiery communist, was an inspired teacher and lecturer. He had a deep-seated difficulty in writing down his work, and I do not know of any other completed work of his than the few essays and lectures of the memorial volume that Professor Austin Duncan-Jones edited. What I do know and what in itself would call for attention to the friendship is that Wittgenstein indeed loved Bachtin, was unusually happy and gay in his presence, and never dropped him as he easily did others. His was the rare case of Wittgenstein taking a person as he found him. All this in spite of the fact that they were poles apart in outlook and character. Bachtin was given to extremes of passion and an uncontrolled exuberance of feeling and expression. He always seemed on the verge of erupting, like a volcano. He suffered from many irrational fears and obsessions, loved expansiveness, was a great gourmet. Unlike Wittgenstein, Bachtin, though childless, could take delight in children, even in cats. They did however share a kind of childlike innocence, and lacked everything commonplace.

BUT I SHOULD NOT LIKE it to be understood that I am writing this solely out of concern for two long-dead friends of Wittgenstein's and ours. To have known him was an experience that gave one an uplift that endures, but that also, in my case, resulted in strife that still rankles. I also wanted to describe Wittgenstein's confession as he made it to me.

In the autumn of 1969 we were packing to go to Canada where my husband had accepted a visiting professorship. "What will you do with yourself?" a friend asked. "What you want is a project." And I did in fact have too much time on my hands. I found moreover that every school-child in Canada was "doing a project", where in old days he would have been doing his home-work. This then was to be my project; a memoir of Wittgenstein.

I AM BAD at dates and exact details. But with the help of a few landmarks in my life, like marriage and the birth of our children, I can put the events of the 1930s into some sort of order. Thus I calculate that it was in 1934 (or maybe late 1933) that Francis Skinner called at our Cambridge house to ask whether I would give him lessons in Russian. He was at the time a post-graduate scholar of Trinity College, an extremely shy, boyish chap. He had a club foot, and the memory of his rapid ascent of the stairs and as rapid noisy rushing down them two or three at a time is vivid in my mind. Though not many years in England and Cambridge, I was already used to this very English phenomenon —the over-shy young sons of the educated middle classes. Was his shyness aggravated by being a cripple? I respected him from the start for the way he paid no attention to his self-consciousness and discussed arrangements looking straight at me. I knew what tricks I would use if I found myself blushing before a stranger. Our sensibilities we should leave in the care of others— some such thought went through my head. I had an impression that the fee I asked, though standard at the time, appeared too high for him. "Could a friend come along to the lessons? But he isn't sure yet. He hasn't made up his mind." "Bring him along. The fee will be the same for two." They seemed to be grateful, for soon they sent me the largest hydrangea I have ever seen. I was quite unprepared to find, when they knocked at the door, that Francis's friend was Dr Wittgenstein.

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I had come to Cambridge in 1930 and used to attend the meetings of the Moral Science Club before my marriage in the summer of 1931. This was the time when, under the impact of Wittgenstein, young men went about saying: "It's absurd to say that 2 is a number—what else could it be?" It was mostly students who came to these gatherings that were presided over by Professor G. E. Moore; and Wittgenstein was the disturbing (perhaps disrupting) centre of these evenings. He would talk for long periods without interruption, using similes and allegories, stalking about the room and gesticulating. He cast a spell. The expression on Moore's face as he listened patiently and attentively was tolerant, impressed, but also questioning. I should doubt the veracity of this ancient memory if television had not brought home to me that a facial expression, a look in the eye, can never be disguised, stands out, and outlives the words of the speaker and all else to do with the occasion. To me this look of Moore's stands for the attitude of educated Cambridge to Wittgenstein at that time.

I HAD JUST TAKEN a Ph.D. in philosophy in Berlin, but this was something quite different. I was only just learning to speak English, and much of what was said went over my head. I remember a paper given by Richard Braithwaite which Wittgenstein appeared to tear to pieces only to end up, to the amazement of all, by giving it his approval or maybe just letting it pass. Clarity might not always result from these discussions, but there was always revelation. Once he said: "You cannot love God, for you do not know him", and went on elaborating the theme. Some complaints about his monopolising the discussion led to his abandoning the Moral Science Club. But soon he was begged to come back. All this was in 1930–31.

When in 1934 he and Francis came for lessons I knew much about him without having met him. He seemed to have been a legend from the start and Cambridge was full of stories about him. First and foremost he was the feared (why feared?) author of the *Tractatus*. Before he became a Fellow of Trinity he had to be asked to leave his private lodgings because he ran the bath in the night. He asked about every single object: "But is it genuine?" He disliked intellectual women and in company literally turned his back on them; a friend of mine, whom he had treated in this rude way, thought it a huge joke. His opinions on most matters were absolute, allowing of no argument. At a time when intellectual Cambridge was turning Left he was still an old-time conservative of the late Austro-Hungarian Empire. But he was charmed to find Mrs Lettice Ramsey doing some complicated sewing, would watch her at it, and would want to know how it was done. A young friend told me what a delightful experience it had been to go with Wittgenstein to buy a pen-knife. His keenness on and involvement in instruments, material objects, and all skills was something very special—for them he had the patience and tolerance he could never have for human beings. He would often be seen walking in the narrow streets or along the river with some young man or other, talking and gesticulating, keeping a step ahead of his companion so as to turn and face him. In schoolboy language he could be a holy terror and a *Besserwisser*, a know-all. To the early 1930s belongs a poem by Julian Bell (later killed driving an ambulance in Spain) in a student magazine lampooning Wittgenstein for telling everybody off for misusing language while himself doing all the talking. Also for being rude and inconsiderate to others. When the poem appeared the kindest people enjoyed a laugh; it released accumulated tension, resentment, perhaps fear. For no one could ever turn the tables on Wittgenstein and pay him back in kind.

So now, hearing that he was to have Russian lessons with me, one of the kindest people I ever knew, Mrs Jessie Stewart, said: "So Wittgenstein is to be your pupil? Good. Now you have got him where you want him." Actually he turned out to be a fairly docile as well as an outstanding pupil.

The Student of Russian

HIS APPEARANCE has often been described: small in stature but of concentrated inner energy, neat, with a keen look as of a bird in flight. I never saw him wearing a closed collar or tie. He found it hard to sit still; it seemed as though at any minute he might take off. There was something stern and forbidding, yet naïve, in his expression, directed to others but also to himself. He might strike one as a man with a chip on his shoulder "Satanic pride" I called it, exaggerating as usual. He looked distant except when he relaxed, got absorbed in study, or told a childish joke with a grin. Once he started talking he could hold you in thrall; I don't think he was aware of this gift. The man who was later to make the famous statement: "Philosophy is the struggle against

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the bewitchment of our mind by means of language" had no inkling how he himself cast a spell whenever he said something, anything. He was altogether a naïve man, remarkably unselfconscious. He could be irritable in the extreme, but much (maybe most of it) he could not help—his life was made hard by excessive sensibility, a sensitivity affecting all the senses. More things could drive him mad than would other people. Being irritable myself, though I may have been less so at that time, I cannot think of another person anything like so irascible. His most typical frequent expression was the cry "Intolerable, intolerable", not sounding the first vowel, "*'ntolerable, 'ntolerable*", throwing back his head and rolling his eyes upwards. It was impossible to doubt the sincerity of this as of everything else he said.

His gestures were very expressive: throwing up his arms in despair or (rarely) a gesture to express approval. Bachtin told me years later, "Wittgenstein thinks your *teaching* is good, like this . . .", punctuating the air with thumb and forefinger joined in imitation of Wittgenstein. "Teaching" was stressed; it was a drop in the ocean of his strictures on things I did and, above all, on my manner of speaking. That was always too flamboyant and imprecise for him. But while we had work to do friction did not obtrude. They came once a week for a two-hour lesson; I think of the experience with pleasure. In a remarkably short time they mastered the grammatical structure (the part I most love teaching) and proceeded to read good Russian prose. Soon I was able to amuse them with a fitting proverb. In later years I was rarely to see them so cheerful again. I cannot recall after how many (or rather how few) weeks it happened that Wittgenstein was ill in bed and sent me a translation he had made of a Grimm's fairy tale from German into Russian. I sat up and realised that although Francis was going ahead extremely well I should have to deal with them separately. How I did it I cannot think now. The period in which both came for lessons could not have been more than three Cambridge terms of eight weeks each. Wittgenstein also came in 1935 by himself for Russian conversation, on the eve of his trip to the USSR.

FRANCIS SKINNER reached considerable proficiency and in the vacations would write me letters in Russian that I would send back corrected. Alas, I now can find only a single letter from him in my possession, written in English. It was sent in August 1940 from the Bachtins' house, where he and Wittgenstein were on a visit, to a farm near Pershore where we were picking fruit. Regretting our absence—"Best wishes in this anxious time"—uncertain when we might have another chance to meet—"Dr Wittgenstein is going back to Cambridge, tomorrow latest, as if anything happened he may not be able to return". It brings back the summer of 1940 when they were indiscriminately rounding up and interning German and Austrian nationals and refugees. (Like Wittgenstein, Francis always wrote on lined pages torn out of a school exercise book.)

Whether the fairy tale Wittgenstein translated was *Rumpelstiltskin* or another I am not sure, but I remember him picking up the volume of Grimm's tales and reading out with awe in his voice:

Ach, wie gut ist dass niemand weiss
Dass ich Rumpelstilzchen heiss.

"Profound, profound", he said. I liked *Rumpelstiltskin,* understood that the strength of the dwarf lay in his name being unknown to humans; but was unable to share Wittgenstein's vision. To watch him in a state of hushed, silent awe, as though looking far beyond what oneself could see, was an experience next only to hearing him talk.

Halfway through the lesson a tray of tea and home-made fruit cake would arrive and be much enjoyed. There would be an occasional set-to, as when Wittgenstein called for more water in his tea. "More, more water", he clamoured, while I told him his cup was already nearly pure water. He then told an anecdote of an Austrian peasant who kept on asking for more rum in his coffee (*"Noch einen Schuss"*) and went on until he was drinking it neat. His rare anecdotes would be of this innocent character. Asking for a second slice of cake he said: "You remember a person who has put a good meal before you." I always imagined he was not a born ascetic and could appreciate the "good things" of life, all those things he voluntarily gave up. In 1935 we were moving house and I said I would need new curtains. "I could help you choose", he said. It slipped out and he immediately withdrew his offer, looking scared.

ONE AFTERNOON my little girl, aged two-and-a-half, burst into the room. When she was removed, I said: "Children disturb you." This called forth his ire, expressed only in a gesture: children are

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children, they are there to be put up with, what an absurd thing to talk about. Soon after, Francis brought an armful of toys for the little girl, all bought at Woolworth's. This store, where no object at that time cost more than sixpence, had become their favourite shop. There, only questions of utility need arise. Wittgenstein squirmed if you so much as mentioned "taste." Yet years later I was to meet a lady who had been a student in Cambridge before the first World War and who remembered Wittgenstein as an aesthete.

Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* soon became his favourite reading in Russian. More than twenty years later Mrs Truscott, Skinner's sister, whom I then met for the first time, gave me Wittgenstein's copy of the book that she had found among her brother's things. In it every single accent had been pencilled in. As soon as Wittgenstein assured himself that there are no absolute rules of accentuation in Russian, he put in the lot. I had read some passages with him. It is a feat by any standard to have accented the entire novel, and a learner cannot do it on his own—or rather, if he could, there would be no need for it. Did he have another teacher of Russian or, what is more likely, did he read it with Bachtin? We read no poetry, but once he quoted a Pushkin lyric to me. That he most certainly had from Bachtin, who adored reading Russian poetry out aloud. On the subject of Dostoevsky we quarrelled. I once said, which is a matter of fact, that he learned much from Dickens. Wittgenstein would not have it, and was indignant. "Dickens", he pointed two feet above the floor—"Dostoevsky", his arm went up high.

Wittgenstein & Skinner

I NEVER HEARD HIM talk politics, though who can doubt that he was deeply disturbed by the events of those years, and may have been shaken in the conservatism he brought from home. Yet whenever a political issue would come up he would bristle. Once when he said something derogatory about Marxism I turned on him furiously, saying that it was nothing like so discredited as were his own antiquated political opinions. To my astonishment he looked taken aback. He was silenced! In six-to-seven years' acquaintance it did not happen more than three or four times that he would stop to consider something I said (apart from my teaching), and then his expression would imply: Can it be she knows what she is talking about? I like to recall that honest doubt, as I do the occasion when I spoke of a blunder I had committed, and he weighed it up: "Yes, you lack sagacity."

I had just been elected to the Cambridge Committee of the Friends of the Soviet Union and imparted the good news to the two of them. Wittgenstein told me firmly that political work was the worst possible thing for me to do; it would do me great harm. "What you should do is to be kind to others. Nothing else. Just be kind to others." It was a disturbing experience when he wanted you to do something other than what you were doing. He conjured up a vision of a better you, undermining your confidence. I soon noticed that I could say things to him in Russian that would have infuriated him if said in English. Maybe because spoken Russian (other than political jargon) is freer of clichés, or maybe because he would not have recognised a Russian cliché. By exploding, "making a scene", one also escaped the restrictions that uttering factual statements imposes. He allowed one to have strong feelings, and would accept things said in a temper.

SINCE I CAN HARDLY pretend not to be aware how much one needs credentials to talk of Wittgenstein at all, I am apprehensive that my "project" may read as though it describes a friendship with the man, a thing I have no claim to. All I should be doing is to relate the things I remember of him and my thoughts about him in the years from 1934 to 1941. It must be understood that a lunch at our house or a tea with him in Trinity College were rare, isolated events.

He was the most elusive of men, shrouding his comings and goings in mystery. Once, maybe twice, he called with a rucksack on his back, as if he had just arrived by train, perhaps from abroad; yet you would not ask him where he came from. I would never have dreamed of asking him a personal question (how many people did?), and he never asked me one. He called when he wanted to see you or had some business with you. The latter offered the best basis for some kind of understanding, of getting on with him. He dictated throughout the form of relationship in which people stood to him. Much of his life will remain forever unknown to his closest friends.

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I HAVE NO DOUBT that in those years Francis Skinner was the person closest to him. His attitude to Francis is what above all I should like to evaluate. His tone to the so much younger (Francis was 22 then, Wittgenstein 45) and very shy man was stern, as of a judge, yet Francis was the only one to whom I heard Wittgenstein refer in his absence by his Christian name. Otherwise he used surnames. The stern tone was of course habitual to him, the tone in which he talked philosophy. We and the Bachtins noticed how much gayer and more at ease Francis was when Wittgenstein was not about. There again, how many people were gay and at ease in his presence?

Soon Wittgenstein was to play a decisive role in Francis's life by influencing him to give up mathematics and become an apprentice in the Cambridge Scientific Instrument Company. "Was Wittgenstein good or bad for Skinner?"—this was a question raised in recent years in a talk with me by Francis's sister when I first met her. In a restrained way she told me of the consternation in her family when her brother, a brilliant mathematician and a scholar of Trinity College, decided to give it all up. "Why", she asked, *"why?"* She described how she and their parents would set out from Letchworth to look up Francis in College, and how he would come running down the stairs, hushing them: "I'm busy. I've got Dr Wittgenstein here. We're working. Come back later." Hushing and repression are connected for me with much I heard about Wittgenstein.

His moral and practical influence on those around him strikes one as at least as significant as his work. Was it his fault that he left an imprint on the character and manner of speech of some, so that a decade after his death Roy and I recognised it in a new acquaintance, a non-philosopher? I left Roy talking to the visitor and went to make some coffee. When I came back I heard them talking about a picture in the National Gallery. The young man was saying: "You mean the one that hangs in room number so-and-so, on the left as you enter the door. Its size about . . . . " We pricked up our ears. Soon it transpired that, yes, he had been a friend of Wittgenstein's. In spite of his stern and difficult character he had innumerable friends in unexpected places.

You recognised a disciple and *some* friends by the way they cautiously threaded their path in conversation, as though stepping on stones across a morass. But then, Wittgenstein would most likely pick out people of factual utterance as most congenial to him (Bachtin was an exception). It is hard to imagine Francis Skinner, a fellow of extreme modesty, ever talking in any other way. Yet when Francis sniffed at the sight of a history book lying on the table, you detected bad influence. To my eyes he showed no signs of suffering from dictatorial treatment. Over the years he was noticeably gaining in confidence and maturity, yet preserving unscathed his own innate qualities of kindness and sensitivity to others. With a hard struggle he overcame his terrible shyness. He could be cheerful and liked the company of others. Without guile of any kind, he was incapable of thinking evil of anyone. He could and did learn to be more practical though, alas, he would always be too unselfish, too self-effacing. While his life was immeasurably enriched by Wittgenstein's philosophy and friendship, I think of him as spiritually holding his own. His decision to volunteer for the International Brigade during the Spanish Civil War was entirely independent, free. (That he was not accepted must have been due to his physical disability.)

When Francis became a mechanic in 1935, Wittgenstein, who never justified his actions, said once "He would never be happy in academic life." That was probably true. The working people were kinder, less self-conscious, than his own class. He would go to a party at Pye's, to which he transferred from the Cambridge Instrument Co., and join in the fun, even dance. Yet the question whether Wittgenstein had a right to influence some young person in such far-reaching practical decisions just because it was given to him to do so, still remains unanswered. I know that to ask this is to talk "nonsense" in Wittgenstein's terms. But it is not nonsense in terms of the problems that arise in the relations between the generations and of the grave responsibilities that devolve on an older generation. What I mean is, how far can and should parents, teachers, and prophets go in directing the young? It is a staggering thought that Wittgenstein almost certainly never asked himself: are there other people close to Francis whose attitude should be taken into account? He would treat Francis as a responsible adult able to take his own decisions, without realising the immense force of his own personality and how inescapably it came into play. On the other hand, one cannot criticise but must admire him for the fact that calculations about status, class and worldly success never entered his head. What he was concerned with was that people should be true to their own nature; without this they could not be happy.

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ON OUR RETURN from Canada I realised how important a part of my "project" Wittgenstein's relations with Skinner constituted. I had already had an intimation of how they looked to Skinner's parents. Might Wittgenstein have appeared as an evil genius to them? Feeling the need for more knowledge I got in touch with Mrs Truscott who added some factual information. A former tutor of Trinity College, Professor Harry Sandbach, kindly looked up for me some data concerning Skinner's years there.

In 1925, when Francis was 13, he was seriously ill with osteomyelitis, which in the absence of modern antibiotics required that part of the bone was cut away, making him a cripple and subject to renewed dangerous attacks. His physical development was retarded and he could never play games at school. To his family he was always a very delicate though brilliant boy who needed to be treated with exceptional care. In 1930 he went up to Trinity from St Paul's as a scholar, took mathematics and was a wrangler in 1933. He received prizes and scholarships for another two years of post-graduate work, though by then it would seem that he was totally immersed in Wittgenstein's philosophy and devoted himself to working with him.

Well might it seem to his mother that he was given a studentship by Trinity in order to work with Wittgenstein. According to Professor Sandbach, however, it is unlikely that special conditions were laid down by the college, though his application would probably have stated what he proposed to do. Under Wittgenstein's influence Francis decided to give up mathematics. He talked of taking up medicine (this had been done by another, earlier pupil of Wittgenstein's, Drury); but his parents could not afford to see him through medical studies. There was talk as an alternative of his becoming a mechanic, and later an idea that he might go and settle in Russia (with or without Wittgenstein, Mrs Truscott is not sure). This plan caused the parents great consternation. He and Wittgenstein spent holidays together, one in Norway, another in Ireland. For the summer of 1935 plans were made for the two to go to the Soviet Union. But at the last moment Francis had a recurrence of his illness and could not travel. Wittgenstein then presumably went on his own (not with the "friend"—who was Francis—as Professor von Wright suggests in his biographical sketch). On Wittgenstein's return from the USSR, as Mrs Truscott remembers, whatever plans they had had were abandoned. This was also my impression at the time—I will come to it later.

Francis in that year started work at the Cambridge Instrument Company. He continued to be a close friend of Wittgenstein's until his death; and at weekends they often went for long walks together. During the War he was on war-priority work. Mrs Truscott says that at the funeral (October 1941) Wittgenstein looked "more desperate than usual." Her parents, she thinks, scarcely made contact with him; and he behaved to ordinary people (in her words) like "a frightened wild animal". He refused to go to the house after the funeral, but she saw him walking round Letchworth afterwards with Dr Burnaby, the tutor of Trinity, looking "quite wild".

WE KNOW THAT Wittgenstein dictated the Brown Book to Skinner in 1934–5. But would we not be wrong to assume that Skinner acted only as an amanuensis? Even to an outsider it appeared as if Wittgenstein tested and perfected his thoughts in his endless talks with Francis and a few other young men. They were somehow essential to the formulation of his thought, and perhaps hold the clue to why he chose to live in England. In them, sons of the English middle class, were combined the two features Wittgenstein required at that time in a disciple: childlike innocence and first-class brains.

The American professor I mentioned at the beginning of my account asked, in answer to my information, "What did Francis Skinner publish?" It was the vulgar-academic reaction. Francis published nothing, never thought of it. But if there is really no sort of record or recognition of his contribution, above all in the years 1933–5, when he devoted himself entirely to working with Wittgenstein—let that contribution have been only a momentary hesitation on his part during a discussion, his unhappiness over some complex sentence, a mild protest ("Yes, but . . .")—then something essential has been lost and overlooked, not least an important feature of Wittgenstein's mode of work.

I MUST PICK UP the main thread of my account of Wittgenstein. Although there would be continuing contact between us, and business too, until we left Cambridge in 1939, and occasional meetings after then, the easier times of my relationship with him came to an end with the end of the lessons.

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I was expecting my second baby in January 1935. With the approach of the Christmas vacation I had to tell them that I should not be able to continue. I was in my eighth month and looked it; it never entered my head that they would not have noticed it. But they were quite ignorant of my condition, assumed I was in bad health, assured me that I would be better after a rest. Their naïvety was as of two schoolboys, and it inhibited me from telling them of the coming confinement. I had to leave it till the baby arrived, and told them by letter.

Of the two following years my memory brings back events with some uncertainty as to their exact order. The common factor was that Wittgenstein was working hard, complaining frequently of not being able to concentrate. I think of 1935 as a lighter-coloured period. Extra depression affecting the man is connected for me with the time before he left for Norway in 1936.

Pleasant scenes of the earlier times arise in the memory. Roy and I went to the Tivoli to see Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers in *Top Hat,* and in the foyer we met Wittgenstein and Skinner; Wittgenstein spoke of their dancing with lively admiration, with enthusiasm, making detailed and quite serious comments on their technique. Later in the darkened cinema we saw them sitting in the front row—a short and tall silhouette; Wittgenstein was very short-sighted but (I was told) refused to wear glasses. On another occasion he told me that he never missed seeing Ruth Draper.

ONE DAY, SOMEWHAT SOLEMNLY, they invited us to tea with them in Trinity. We sat in those famous deckchairs which I found rather uncomfortable for my back. The room was bare, without a flower or a picture. They produced thick tomato sandwiches, saying with pride they were bought at Woolworth's. After tea Wittgenstein talked and we listened. What it was about I don't now know, except that he was transported and so were we. He spoke at us, yet occasionally lost sight of us—Roy and I could exchange a glance. We walked home saying that there was nobody else who could in this way make you feel that your mind was stretched, thrown off its course, forced to look at matters it had never considered before. When we were eating the thick sandwiches Wittgenstein praised Woolworth's merchandise. He had bought a camera there in components each at 6d, total price two shillings—an excellent instrument! It led to his offering to take some snaps of me, and he did so one sunny day in Neville's Court in Trinity. I sat on a bench, and as he knelt on one knee to peer through the lens I had the sensation that I was a material object to him and that he might come up and absent-mindedly move my elbow an inch. Francis told me that Wittgenstein would devote hours to shaving off tiny slivers from the small photos he took before he would be satisfied with some kind of balance achieved. Certainly when he gave me my copies they were much reduced from the original size; one was now smaller than an inch square. During the Spanish Civil War Wittgenstein, seeing in our room an enlarged photograph of John Cornford, who had just been killed in Spain, sniffed: "They think you can just enlarge a photo. Now look. It's all trousers." I looked, and of course, he was right. On the day he photographed me he also showed me round the Fellows' Garden and stood in awe before some plant, saying "You can almost see it grow hourly. . . ." I had my tonsils out and was in the Evelyn Nursing Home feeling sorry for myself. Wittgenstein called. I croaked: "I feel just like a dog that has been run over." He was disgusted: "You don't know what a dog that has been run over feels like."

Visiting Russia and Norway

THAT SUMMER, PREPARING FOR his trip to Russia, he came by himself for Russian conversation. Francis was now working in the factory and did not join in this. Nor was I told that he was included in the plan to visit Russia. The conversation lessons were excruciating. We sat in the garden. With the utmost impatience he rejected any topic I would suggest—everything verbal that a traveller or a simple mortal anywhere might need. To him they were all absurd, all non-topics. Questions that would have come naturally to me—why are you going, what are your plans, etc.—I knew I must not ask. Only if I cried out in Russian—"They could find nothing to talk about and wished each other a good morning"—would he relax and we would have started. It was good, but rare, to get him to laugh at himself. Did he know how much he inhibited others, while his dearest wish was for them to behave in a natural way? His temperament surely was immeasurably more intolerant and exacting than any logical theory could ever demand. He was driven to distraction by the manner in which people spoke.

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When he returned from Russia he sent Skinner to give me a report. At least, that was what Francis said: "Dr Wittgenstein asked me to give you a report." First came some technical details of the journey. He had been well received. He went to Moscow University to call on Mrs Yanovska, Professor of Mathematics, and sent in his name. He heard her exclaim in astonishment: "What, not the great Wittgenstein?" At this stage I conjectured that he had sent Skinner so as to report truthfully things he could not have spoken of himself. He had been offered a chair of philosophy at Kazan, the university where Tolstoy had studied. He had taken no decisions about his future.

Of Professor Yanovska, Wittgenstein told me later that she was a fine person, with a young son to bring up. Her life was hard, and she suffered from diabetes. Trying to sort out events in my head, I always assumed that Wittgenstein, before going to Norway in 1936, had asked me to send Professor Yanovska some medicine for her complaint. But a letter of his from Norway (dated 4.9.37) that I unearthed quite recently proves that I was mistaken; a "postscript" to this letter (dated 12.10.37) confirms my error—though I don't think my other assumption is wrong, namely that he first returned from Norway in the summer of 1937.

The letter, from Skjolden i Sogn, is longer than his usual short business-like notes, and originally enclosed one in Russian from Professor Yanovska in which she asked Wittgenstein to send her some medicine for her illness (Protamine-Zinc-Insulin, Quibbs, New York—this should have been Squibb). He asked me to enquire whether it could be done through Boots in Cambridge, saying he would be prepared to help her if it wouldn't come to more than £10 or £15. He underlined three words in Russian that he could not make out in her letter and asked me to explain them; I was to return the letter to him and not talk of it to anyone, but to ask Roy's advice. His handwriting was of wonderful energy and gives me a thrill even now; he wrote on lined pages from a school exercise book. The end of the letter is missing; "annoyed" is spelt "anoied." I carried out his request, and Boots did the sending. The postscript I referred to is on the back of two small pictures of Bergen. It says that he had arranged through a London friend "who acts as my banker" to send me a cheque for £3. "If your expences [*sic*] are more we shall arrange things at Xmas or before, when I come to Cambridge." Of this I have no recollection. His anxiety about the money was due to the fact that at the time he was no longer a Fellow of Trinity and had no regular income.

While still on matters to do with his trip to Russia in 1935, I should like to repeat what I said earlier: that my impression was that on returning he had decided almost at once against going to settle there, though the idea of Russia as a spiritual refuge was to recur in his last letter to Engelmann of 21.6.37, an echo of a desire expressed in a much earlier letter to the same friend of September 1922: "it still goes round in my head—an eventual flight to Russia. . . ." I think these give a clue to his attitude to Russia, a matter to which I shall return. Suggestions of a second Russian visit in 1939 rest only on remote hearsay and are clearly mistaken.

I RETURN TO the year 1936 and Wittgenstein's departure for Norway. Is it hindsight on my part, a trick of memory, that I think of that year as one in which his spirits were more than usually oppressed by anxiety and uncertainty, driving him to cut himself off entirely from people? When he came back to Cambridge a year later his mind still appeared unrelieved of the extra burden, and the confession seems to have been the outcome of a long period of crisis. Certainly no lighter-coloured memories as of the previous year come to mind. Yet there is reason for caution in trying to evaluate the mental state of a person who in some manner was always given to despair.

Before leaving for Norway he made a tour of Brittany by car with (as he told me) a newly-acquired friend who knew the area well and was an excellent driver. Wittgenstein had evidently enjoyed the trip. "My friend is a cripple", he added, "lame in one leg." I remember this detail of a second lame friend, for it struck me as odd. Saying goodbye he asked me to send him regularly an English weekly to Skjolden. Which one? The *Illustrated London News*! His expression—anticipating my astonishment, yet forbidding comment as trivial and superfluous—was only too familiar. Francis visited Wittgenstein in Norway, and on his return gave me a description of what it was like. It was a life of total isolation and solitude. You had to row across in a boat to buy bread; it was difficult to get house-cleaning done.

A letter of Wittgenstein's from Norway caused

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the greatest explosion of fury on my part, a fury that rankled the more since I would not dare to express it to him and I could only vent it when talking to one or two friends. I had been doing a little teaching and political work, but was longing for more things that would take me out of the house. So I was happy when I was asked to take a W.E.A. course on current events. Looking back 35 years I can see that it was idiotic of me, knowing Wittgenstein, not to anticipate how he would react to these tidings. Yet, I still think, my stupidity does not justify or excuse the harsh and hectoring letter I had from him. To think too that it was to be the only personal letter of any length that he ever wrote to me, as though stern duty impelled him to do it!

Nowadays, when I no longer lecture or teach, I still cannot recall this letter calmly. He had a great capacity to wound. The wholeness of his character makes partial criticism of him appear carping, but I could never look on his ability to find out the weak spots of another human being and to hit out hard as anything but a flaw. The knowledge that he was at the same time a man of great purity and innocence cannot alter my feeling.

WHAT HE WROTE was that I must on no account give that course, it was wrong for me, it was evil and damaging. I quote from memory of its impact, as in a fury I tore up the letter. Though there was never any danger that his strictures would divert me from what I was doing, yet here I am, still feeling hot under the collar at the memory; and I draw from this the conclusion that his influence was bad for me, and maybe for others like me. Though he was a shrewd judge of character and free of self-righteousness, he applied to others the stern standards he applied to himself. If you had committed a murder, if your marriage was breaking up, or if you were about to change your faith, he would be the best man to consult. He would never refuse to give practical help. But if you suffered from fears, insecurity, were badly adjusted, he would be a dangerous man, and one to be kept away from. He would not be sympathetic to common troubles, and his remedies would be all too drastic, surgical. He would treat you for original sin. The passage in an early letter to Engelmann (11.10.20) is quite ghoulish: "I simply had to chop off a limb or two, those that remain are the healthier for it. . . ." The manner of his confession also throws light on this tendency. You would have to fight hard not to acquire a new brand of guilt—looking over your shoulder, what would Wittgenstein say to your doing this, saying that, reading some book or other? It would mean a conflict, for you well knew that you could learn from him more than from anyone else (and I do not mean logic or philosophy). If only he had been less imperious, less ready with prohibitions, more patient with another person's character and thought. Alas, he was no pedagogue.

It may seem that I am making sweeping statements because Wittgenstein wrote me a harsh letter. But I am fully aware of the very personal nature of my own reaction, just as I am of the fact that he disliked professional women and that his treatment of people varied greatly. If I generalise it is because I am thinking of the position he occupied in Cambridge at the time. People to whom you spoke of him showed great tolerance, taking for granted that he himself was and could not help being intolerant, irascible, idiosyncratic. Such was the reaction of a younger friend of ours, Alister Watson, a mathematician, who with his wife Susan was also good friends with Wittgenstein. To him I complained of Wittgenstein's letter; and he, only about half Wittgenstein's age and not yet settled in a profession, shrugged, smiling ever so wisely: "Well, he is like that. . . ."

IF BY A SENSE OF HUMOUR we mean the capacity to see ourselves in the very act of dealing with others, then Wittgenstein lacked it entirely. He could not possibly have been aware of the harshness, amounting to cruelty, with which he hit out, never pulling his punches.[2] Nor would he know of the fear he inspired in people. A less inhibited man, one more given to wrath and quick anger, it is hard to imagine. I was talking of these things to an intelligent young woman I got to know in Canada. "Much good it is criticising Wittgenstein" I said, disgusted with myself. Her answer: "Perhaps it is no good, but might it not help, through these memories, to describe the man? If you were only carping, you would try to make up for it by extolling him." "Intolerable, intolerable" I cried, in the way I remember him doing. I thought it clever of her to suggest tentatively that an excess of sensibility might itself account for diminished sensitivity to the feelings of others.

[2] Dr F. R. Leavis told my husband of a typical case that occurred in his presence, and on this occasion, not uncharacteristically, Wittgenstein readily accepted Dr Leavis's criticism of his behaviour.

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When Wittgenstein said to Professor Norman Malcolm (as he reports in his biographical sketch) that he lacked affection though he was in need of it, I think he may well have been wrong. He certainly often expressed and showed gratitude; he sent the Bachtins and us Carlsbad plums one Christmas, might post a picture-postcard from Vienna with birdies wishing one "*Fröhliche Ostern.*" Constance Bachtin told me that when staying with them he would struggle in, carrying and spilling over the floor a dozen little packages of coffee, small so that they should not go stale. I remember the delicacy with which he sent me the news of Francis's death, enclosing it in a letter addressed to Roy.

The Confession

I ALWAYS WANTED to write down Wittgenstein's confession as I remember it since I find it revealing about him and something to learn from; also because it might help me to overcome a feeling of guilt, for I felt at the time and feel now that I was unkind to him on this occasion. It was embarrassing to find that it remained a taboo subject long after his death. Engelmann in his edition of Wittgenstein's letters to him (1967) omits the one that contained the confession, though there is in another letter an explicit reference to it. The years were going by, and one by one the people died who I knew had heard it, until only two Englishmen in this category are alive (now I fear maybe only one). I felt I must hurry and write it down, for I could hardly expect an Englishman to come out with a matter told him in confidence.

It happened on Wittgenstein's return from Norway in the summer of 1937. He rang one morning to ask whether he could come and see me; and it put me into a temper to be told firmly, when I asked whether it was urgent (I believe one of the children was not well), that it was urgent and could not wait. "If ever a thing could wait", I thought facing him across the table, "it is a confession of this kind and made in this manner." How often does a mental attitude appear in the memory bearing physical attributes—I could swear to it now that he kept his mackintosh on throughout, buttoned up, sitting up very straight and forbiddingly. Can I even separate my attitude to him then from the much modified view of the event that by degrees I came to adopt?

" I have come to make a confession." He had just been to Professor Moore for the same purpose. "What did Professor Moore say?" He smiled. "He said, 'You are an impatient man, Wittgenstein'. . . ." "Well, did you not know you were?" Wittgenstein, with disdain: "I did not know." I can remember two "crimes" to which he confessed: the first had to do with his being Jewish in origin, the second with a wrong he committed when he was a teacher in a village school in Austria.

On the first issue he said that he understood that most people who knew him, including his friends, took him to be three-quarters Aryan and one-quarter Jewish. In fact the proportion was the reverse, and he had done nothing to prevent this misapprehension.

I cannot be sure, but in his precise way he may have used the terms Aryan, non-Aryan throughout, not Jewish or non-Jewish, a very significant difference in his case and at that time. Mistakenly I took it for granted at the time that his words implied that he had three Jewish grandparents, in the sense that they were members of the Jewish community. I continued in this belief till 1969, in fact till I read the introductory note by Dr B. F. McGuinness to Engelmann's *Letters from Wittgenstein*, from which I discovered that one of the grandparents was a gentile, two were Jews baptised as children, and one was baptised on marriage. "Some Jew," my grandmother would have said.

Leaving all argument aside as to whether an assimilated family like the Wittgensteins can be described, as I have seen it done, as "a typical Viennese Jewish family" (for what in heaven's name should we then call families like the Schnitzlers or the Freuds who did not repudiate the old faith and the Jewish community?), it would appear nevertheless that when Wittgenstein came to England before the first World War and again in the late 1920s, he had no need to designate himself a Jew, and perhaps never even thought of himself as one.

On the other hand, it may be due to the fact that I misunderstood the meaning of his words that the idea of three Jewish grandparents became firmly fixed in my mind, so that the actual terms used by him can never now be dug out and restored to my memory. I had no idea whether he knew that I was a Jewish girl from the Ukraine, who had been through pogroms during the Civil War, whose childhood was darkened, branded by the anti-Semitism of Tsarist Russia. I understood too well the agony a Jew might endure if he was taken for a gentile. The "Jewish problem"—what

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is it for many but what it feels like to be a Jew? I can talk to any purpose on the subject (rarely and sparingly) only with my sister. My reaction to Wittgenstein raising it could only be one of great unwillingness, of longing to get it over quickly.

TO MAKE A CONFESSION must have appealed to Wittgenstein as the most radical way of relieving his mind of an oppressive burden of guilt. He did not ask for an emotional response. His manner forbade it. He was willing to answer questions, and left it to his hearer to react according to his or her nature. He was brought up as a Catholic: was this the accepted, normal form for him? It was not so for me! In later years, whenever I blamed myself for feeling somehow antagonistic, I excused it by thinking: if you come from Russia you cannot cope with a confession made with composure, prepared as it were beforehand; you could if someone came to you with "gnashing of teeth." I know I did say to him: "I am Jewish, and I have often missed the chance to come out with it in time to stop others from revealing their profound dislike of Jews in general. Anyhow, the English are shrewd. I assume they know about me, they probably know about you. . . ." I was moved to see that he looked up hopefully.

When I ask myself now what makes me so absolutely sure that Wittgenstein never made a false statement about his racial origins—and that if he was taken for something other than he was, it could only have been due to omission, conscious or unconscious, on his part—I say firstly: I have never met anyone more incapable of telling a lie, and secondly (and this seems to me to be more concrete evidence) where are the people who were on such terms with him as to ask him pertinent, straightforward questions to do with his family in Vienna, his past, his friends? Whatever people in England assumed about his background they did not enquire from him, and he told no untruth. Before Hitler came to power in 1933 the matter may not have impinged on his mind.

I think he talked for quite a while and certainly said many things I do not now remember. At one stage I cried out: "What is it? You want to be perfect?" And he pulled himself up proudly, saying: "*Of course* I want to be perfect". This memory alone would make me burst with the wish to describe the scene.

I have seen it said that people making personal statements about Wittgenstein are likely to drag him down to their own level. I do not think, however, there are many so mad as to compare themselves in some way, in any way, with him. It would always be obvious that he formed a class, a category of his own. The danger is that he may appear altogether inhuman to future generations. Those who knew him could never see him in this light. The more that is recorded of him, including any faults and frailties, the better, it seems to me. Do not writers on Milton, like Tillyard, still struggle to prove that he was not entirely lacking in amiability?

THE MOST PAINFUL PART of the confession came at the end, a traumatic experience to re-live and own up to. I recall well that at this stage he had to keep a firmer control on himself, telling in a clipped way of the cowardly and shameful manner in which he had behaved. During the short period when he was teaching at a village school in Austria, he hit a little girl in his class and hurt her (my memory is, without details, of a physically violent act). When she ran to the headmaster to complain, Wittgenstein denied he had done it. The event stood out as a crisis of his early manhood. It may have been this that made him give up teaching, perhaps made him realise that he ought to live as a solitary. On this occasion he did tell a lie, burdening his conscience for ever. How like Rousseau's youthful crime against the young servant girl, how like something many of us carry about with us. Wittgenstein was, after all, a man amongst men. Yet the confession also illustrates his own very extreme and drastic way of dealing with a condition when guilt caught up with him, when it became an obstacle to work, very different in character from difficulties inherent in the work itself, to which he wanted nothing better than to devote himself heart and soul.

One may make a guess that the non-Aryan issue having become oppressive for him with the existence of Nazi Germany, other painful memories of wrongs done by him associated themselves naturally, incapacitating him and demanding drastic surgery—a package-deal would be very much in line with his radical nature. He continued, as he spoke, to be so remote as to make it impossible for me to react in sympathy. Did he sense that my feelings were far from kind? They were very unlike those of the two above-mentioned Englishmen who (I know without being told) listened patiently, said little, but showed friendly participation, implying by manner and look that there was no need for him to

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make this confession, but if he thought he should, well and good, so be it. At the risk of being thought fanciful, I should like to add, I can imagine Bachtin, if put in such a position, pacing up and down like a tiger, gesticulating and muttering. And Francis? He would have sat transfixed, profoundly affected, his eyes undeviatingly on Wittgenstein.

I have always blamed myself for my coldness and for being at a loss what to say. Thirty-five years later I think I should have tried to probe why that old memory became so oppressive for him at that time, whether there was something he could do in a practical way to relieve the burden. These are idle speculations. Yet the question seems relevant: should he not have realised that many people live with a constant feeling of guilt? But his temperament was cast in an unchangeable mould. Just as the great modifications in his own philosophical thought did not make him put up more willingly with the manner in which people spoke, so this crisis in his life, so far as I know, did not make him any more tolerant.

A Lunch & Other Incidents

ONE NEVER DREAMT of asking him to a meal with other people. It was hard to foretell what his reactions might be on meeting a stranger.

I clearly remember his having lunch with us on one occasion. Only Roy and I were there, our little girl, and a young nursemaid who looked after her. There was tension, and silence. Wittgenstein glared. We were eating lamb. I seized the chance to break the silence, and said that with English children being so encouraged by books and nursery rhymes to love pets like chicks and lambs, it was awkward to say in a child's presence that it was lamb we were eating. Wittgenstein woke as from a trance. He turned upon me: "Nonsense, there is no problem in this, no problem at all." He was always genuinely cross when I "invented problems" where he could see none, as though I would be adding to his burden by gratuitously increasing their number.

I CAME IN from shopping and the daily help said: "A man has just called with a large rucksack on his back." I ran to the gate and saw Wittgenstein walking off in the direction of the grocery shop over which Skinner had lodgings which Wittgenstein occasionally shared. The heavy metal-frame rucksack was half his height. For all I knew he might just have arrived from abroad.

I caught up with him at the corner of East Road and Hills Road and we both stood looking on while five or six soldiers were digging shallow trenches on the green; they were about three or four inches in depth. It was the days before Munich; Mr Neville Chamberlain was making a stand, acting as though the country was preparing for war. We looked on in silence at the diggers' efforts. I turned to Wittgenstein to protest, to cry out that it's all a sham, that we are lost, but he silenced me by raising his hand forbiddingly. He said: "I am as much ashamed of what is happening as you are. But we must not talk of it." As often, when he stopped you from saying something he looked as though by speaking you would inflict a wound.

This, by the way, is one of the few statements of a political nature for which I can quote him verbatim.

EARLY AFTER THE OUTBREAK of war I had my appendix out. Soon our little girls were evacuated with their school to Shropshire, to be brought back to Birmingham in the summer of 1940, just in time for the "Battle of Britain" and the bombing of Coventry and Birmingham.

In the early spring of 1940, before Hitler's offensive in the West, I was staying in Cambridge with my sister, who was herself at that time a visitor at the house of Francis Cornford in Madingley Road. Wittgenstein rang me there and arranged to call. I walked out along the Madingley Road towards the Observatory to meet him. It must have been exceptionally warm for the time of year, for I remember wearing a light dress, and we did not go indoors, but walked up and down the garden. I told him the children had been evacuated. He may have commiserated with me. I cried out: "What are they up to? Not a shot has been fired. There is no war." I prefer to think that on this occasion he looked more sorrowful than stern. But he reproved me all the same. "Some people", he said, "feel disgusted because birds feed on grubs." One of the rare sayings, profound I think, that have stuck in my memory.

If he spoke of himself at this meeting, it would be most likely to say he could not work, a recurrent theme with him.

He got ready to go. I said: "Come in and have a cup of tea. Meet my sister." He looked scared: "I mustn't. No. I can't." I was furious, yet I still

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saw him down the long drive. What an enslaver the man was! Was he reluctant because of some fear of meeting a new person? Unwilling to walk into Professor Cornford's house? Or just disinclined to comply, accustomed as he was to act entirely according to his own wishes?

On the way he asked (and it could only have been then and at no other time, for another opportunity of mentioning my sister never recurred): "What does your sister do?" "She's trying to write down her childhood memories." He enquired her age and hearing that she was 40, said very firmly: "It is too soon." My sister always thought it a wise remark.

A later memory, with the war no longer phoney but all-too-real and at a very grim stage, is of Wittgenstein walking up and down in our sitting room in Birmingham. At the time he was a medical orderly in a London hospital—his very characteristic contribution to the war effort.

I asked him about his accommodation. He answered in a hushed voice which was expressive of the horror of the experience that his room was below the one into which women in labour were moved. *Intolerable, intolerable!*

FINALLY, A TRIFLING EXAMPLE of his naïvety in some practical matters. This was in the 1930s, in peace-time.

He asked me whether I would put up a friend of his, Drury, when he next visited him in Cambridge. I promised to do so. Weeks passed. One evening the door-bell rang—we were not expecting anyone. A youngish man stood there with a small suitcase. "I am Drury. Dr Wittgenstein said you would put me up. . . ." Wittgenstein had my promise and never imagined it was advisable to confirm it.

Attitudes to England & Russia

ON WITTGENSTEIN'S ATTITUDE to England and to Russia, complex questions that go beyond mere memories and impressions, I should have been wise to keep quiet. But I am urged on by the lack of common sense of much that has been said on this subject. I hope it will emerge why I treat them as one theme.

Engelmann's *Letters from Wittgenstein with a Memoir* are a fund of information about Wittgenstein during the first World War and up to 1925. It is here that we find some clue to his state of mind when the idea of a "flight" to Russia occurred to him: once in a letter of 14 September 1922, and then in that last letter of June 1937 that I have already mentioned. In the two instances, separated by 15 years, his state of mind would appear to have been one of despair—in the earlier letter at the prospect of teaching in a school where he detested the people around, in the latter because of general doubt: "God knows what will become of me, perhaps I shall go to Russia." There is also a letter of February 1925 when, on hearing of Engelmann's plans to go to Palestine, Wittgenstein writes, again in a mood of despair: "I might want to join you—would you take me with you?"

In the circumstances it seems naïve and contradictory of Engelmann to say in his memoir (p.60, under the heading "Wittgenstein in Olmütz") that Wittgenstein did not care particularly where he lived and accepted the most primitive material conditions and the lowliest social milieu. Precisely; these he did accept. But from the conditions into which he was born and where he "naturally" found himself, from these he was in constant flight—an attitude he shared with many contemporary intellectuals of Central Europe, except that in his case it assumed an extreme form. When Wittgenstein wished to flee from civilisation, no place was remote or lonely enough.

Yet the over-riding need to do his work always won in the end, and being at heart a rational man with good horse-sense, he could and did put up with a place that served this purpose. This place was England.

Those who say that Wittgenstein did not care for English ways of life possibly form their opinion from the harsh words he did use about some aspects of English life. But why expect strangers to go about praising the country of their adoption? It must be remembered that Wittgenstein was not a refugee who came to England asking for asylum and who would feel in some special way indebted to the country. He came of his free choice. Also, he knew better than to go about praising England; he might think it indecorous. And, even if it had not been the decade of Stanley Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain, of economic crisis and political disarray, surely he had no more reason to laud Britain than had many Englishmen of his day (the English do not expect all their compatriots to do anything so odd).

But when we start from the other end, so to say, and ask why did he choose England, he who fought hard to arrange his entire life so as to

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have more freedom than any other man or scholar, freedom which for him meant in the end the minimum conditions in which he could go on with his work, then we have the answer: for this he chose England as the most suitable place. True, his choice became more restricted as time went on, but he had made it when many options were open.

PERHAPS WE SHOULD SAY NOT "England" but Cambridge (and particularly Trinity College)—a university that unobtrusively gave help and made only the slightest demands on him. And these institutions expressed something in the English cast of mind and manner of speech (not that he would allow such generalisations) that appealed to him. The work of English philosophers could serve as a basis for him to measure his work against, with less rancour attending the process than elsewhere. We must also keep in mind the importance to Wittgenstein of his disciples. These had to be, as I have suggested, of childlike innocence and excellent brain. Where else could he have found them? And, in the general social environment (as my Canadian friend said), nowhere else would he have met with such tolerance.

All this goes quite well with his detestation and denunciation of many things English, and with his continuing great love and nostalgia for old Vienna.

One could be misled by Wittgenstein since, as a solitary, he appeared to live at a distance from the life lived by the rest of mankind, while in fact everything essential did reach him and he had, at all times, a shrewd idea of what was going on about him in the wider world. One thinks of the economic crisis and unemployment, commercialism and vulgarisation, and above all the imminence of war, as matters that were familiarly present to his mind in these years. But he would not react to their impact as others might. He would not quote things said by Lenin or Stalin, and it is inane to affix any political label to him.[3]

Mrs Truscott says that her parents knew of a tentative plan for her brother Francis to settle in the USSR, talk of which was abandoned after Wittgenstein's return. It seems to have been a joint plan which had not yet taken any definite form, and Wittgenstein's visit was of an exploratory nature. But Wittgenstein had a soft spot for Russia long before 1935, even while he was still what we might call a conservative. The two letters to Engelmann already referred to mention Russia as a place offering a refuge when he was beset by difficulties or maybe when his desire to flee from civilised life gained the upper hand. This idealisation of Russia he shared with many Central European intellectuals of his time, to some of whom she was still "Mother Russia", "Holy Russia" (as she was to Rilke or Barlach). It must be a matter of comfort for some of us that, however unusual and autonomous a man he was, Wittgenstein still belonged to his time and place.

To my mind, his feeling for Russia would have had at all times more to do with Tolstoy's moral teachings, with Dostoevsky's spiritual insights, than with any political or social matters. He would view the latter, which certainly were not indifferent to him, in terms of the former. His rarely expressed political opinions might be naïve. Alister Watson told me in the middle '30s of a talk he had had with Wittgenstein on the subject of the Russian Revolution. According to Alister, Wittgenstein had said that a Revolution is gradual too. He had also said that Lenin had grabbed the wheel of a runaway car; this was no more than a cliché of those times.

It has been suggested that Wittgenstein was attracted to Russia by the more liberal atmosphere created by Stalin's promise of a new Constitution. It is more than possible that news of a more hopeful prospect did reach Wittgenstein. But when we ask why the USSR reached a high-water mark of popularity among the intelligentsia of the West in those years after 1933 (the years of the

[3] My notes on Wittgenstein's attitude to Russia were overtaken by an article by J. Moran on this very theme in the May–June issue (No. 73) of the *New Left Review*, 1972. Mr Moran reports two items new to me.

Until his publication of Wittgenstein's 1935 letter to Keynes there was, to my knowledge, no authoritative statement available from Wittgenstein himself as to the purpose of his visit to the USSR in the summer of that year. Even so, no clear plan emerges; he speaks of "good and bad reasons" for wanting to go to Russia, with a view to settling there later (perhaps having first trained in England to become a medical doctor). As always with Wittgenstein, it is a highly personal statement and difficult to classify. Nevertheless it would seem that his attitude to the Soviet régime at that time was more positive than most knew or assumed. To me it came as more of a surprise to read that Wittgenstein had read Marx (Moran quotes a statement by Professor Rush Rhees), but it is unclear how much he read and whether he made any political sense of it.

For this information we are thankful to Mr Moran. His own comments however show a total misunderstanding of the type of man Wittgenstein was, and that he was above all a person in search of spiritual salvation. The various evidence Mr Moran quotes would have appeared less motley and contradictory if he had had a clue to the man's character.

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Webbs' *Soviet Russia—a New Civilisation*), we find other, perhaps weightier reasons for it than the political development within the USSR. Hitler's coming to power and the approach of war—the shameful behaviour of Western statesmen—Litvinov at the League of Nations—turned the hopes of the European intelligentsia towards Russia. Yes, Wittgenstein might, perhaps, have been able to quote Litvinov on peace being indivisible if he had seen any purpose in doing so.

It has also been said that Wittgenstein changed his plan of settling in the Soviet Union because of "harshening political conditions" there. His last letter to Engelmann seems to contradict this. It was written in the summer of 1937 at the peak of Stalin's Purges and two years after his visit. Was he, anyhow, the kind of man who would rush to conclusions about the general conditions of a strange country hard to get to know after a first short stay there? In any case, political and material conditions were in these years never other than harsh in the extreme. They were the times of the immense upheaval of industrialisation, following the collectivisation of the peasants. 1935 was the year of the trial of the Metro-Vickers engineers, the year when the Soviet Government began to tighten regulations affecting scientists who had settled there as refugees from Nazi Germany, some of whom were already being forced out and were arriving in Britain. All I want to say is that there is (so far) no evidence to show what Wittgenstein thought of these gigantic matters or how they affected his plans. One might suggest that the material hardships, hardly conceivable in the West, and the fact that throughout that decade Russia was living under a siege economy, *might* even have appealed to Wittgenstein's ascetic nature, particularly since the hardships still went hand in hand with a certain equality of opportunity and rewards. I am not implying that political repression had any appeal for him, nor that he was indifferent to it.

On the essential matter that was of immediate concern to himself, he could and very likely did form a clear opinion, short though his visit was, and that was whether he could continue his work there or live there; possibly too whether it would be a suitable place where Francis might settle.

I am a thoughtless woman, for only at this stage do I ask myself, what would have happened if Wittgenstein had settled in the Soviet Union? A hypothetical question that implies many assumptions: but the answer is straightforward. It would have been a catastrophe. He avoided it thanks to his foresight and to Providence—and by the latter I mean nothing more than a conjunction of factors, including some outside the will and character of the person, which prevented him from making a disastrous choice, and allowed him to continue on the course least uncongenial to his nature.

Wittgenstein's Freedom

THOUGH SHOWING SIGNS of great strains and stresses which he must have undergone in childhood, Wittgenstein in the 1930s was the least neurotic of men. His single-mindedness, resoluteness, and will-power make him stand out as a prophet, a kind of general in battle, not just a philosopher. With this went great artistic sensibility and mechanical skill. He was never at loggerheads with material things. And except for the crisis of his confession he did not appear to be at loggerheads with himself, though making the sternest demands on himself.

He never questioned his motives. He did not suffer from irrational fears and insecurity, and was entirely unselfconscious. He was not inhibited in his relations with other people, provided these people were of his choice and his relations with them on his terms. It would be absurd to call him a perfectionist in the neurotic sense of the word.

He was contemplative, yet would anybody call him an introvert? Thinking was action to him. He was not intrigued or amused by human nature. Always a puritan, he was sure this nature was evil; and his attitude to it was one of despair. He excepted the lofty achievements of a few in religion, mysticism, and art, but these achievements he declared to be unfathomable, indeed ineffable.

We can understand his cavalier attitude towards Freud (as it emerges in his discussions with Rush Rhees and others), once we realise that he himself felt he had no need of Freud. I am reluctant to use Freudian terminology, but cannot put it more clearly and briefly than by saying that there was in him no perceptible split between the ego and the super-ego. For that matter, no split of any kind.

He was an aggressive and explosive man, but this too in a very peculiar, naïve way of his own. At 48 he did not know the simplest thing about

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himself, namely, that he was impatient. I have several times mentioned the forbidding severity he directed at himself. But he never saw himself through the eyes of others, and he had no other standards than his own.

The awe in which he was held by those who knew him was due to this freedom of his, and to the means he used to become free and assure his freedom. He simply gave up everything in which mental troubles and complexes breed and flourish: wealth, family, community, and closer national ties. He gave up trying to fit in, except in the most perfunctory form, with existing ways of life, customs, trends. He discarded everything inessential and trivial, all the material things that make for comfort or relief, all pretence and adaptation (though he would allow himself an occasional visit to a "flick", or might read a crime story).

He became the freest of men, certainly with full freedom of choice where to live, and with whom to consort. Yet he had to do his work unremittingly, and for this he depended on a small select band of pupils and disciples: this was the only tie that bound him and this he accepted. If it should be asked, was that tie in any form or manner a homosexual one (a question much in fashion nowadays), I can only say that to my husband and myself, and as far as I know to all others who knew him, Wittgenstein always appeared a person of unforced chastity. There was in fact something of *noli me tangere* about him, so that one cannot imagine anyone who would ever dare as much as to pat him on the back, nor can one imagine him in need of the normal physical expressions of affection. In him everything was sublimated to an extraordinary degree.

RECENTLY I was reminded by Professor George Thomson that Wittgenstein often despaired of philosophy as well as of his own work, and repeatedly said so. He detested many aspects of academic life and what it did to those who lived it. He was in this respect vulnerable and impressionable, so that after a visit to a friend in a mental home (in the '30s) he wanted to devote himself to the care of the mentally sick. But still, when we consider his completed life, surely we are right to say that he did throughout what he believed needed doing, and that he was the man he wanted to be.

When I asked my husband what he had learned from his conversations with Wittgenstein, he thought it over and summed it up in this way. He could learn little that was specific from a man whose opinions were so much his very own and sometimes so idiosyncratic. Indeed, the famous dictum from the *Tractatus*: "What can be said at all can be said clearly, and we should keep silence on what we cannot talk about", seemed to him detestably wrong. But in another sense he learned something decisive: that is, that only those thoughts and opinions should be entertained to which you are entirely pledged. It was this that made all Wittgenstein's views and even occasional remarks memorable. Thus he remains a moral presence—oddly enough, not forbidding or admonishing, but benign and encouraging, perhaps because one thinks of him as always engaged in struggle.

As for me, looking back, I see him bulldozing, year in year out, clearing away the rubble that could only continue to accumulate. I know his life to have been one of fulfilment, yet he seems to me a tragic character.

An Illustration to Dante

Here are Paolo and Francesca
whirled around in the circle of Hell
clipped serenely together
her dead face raised against his.
I can feel the pressure of his arms
like yours about me, locking.

They float in a sea of whitish blobs—
fire, is it? It could have been
hail, said Ruskin, but Rossetti
"didn't know how to do hail."
Well, he could do tenderness.
My spine trickles with little white flames.

Fleur Adcock

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D. J. Enright

Since Then

So many new crimes since then!—
simple simony
manducation of corpses
infringement of copyright
offences against the sumptuary laws
postlapsarian undress
violation of the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty
extinction of the dodo
champerty and malversation
travelling by public transport without a ticket
hypergamy and other unnatural practices
courting in bed
free verse
wilful longevity
dumb insolence
bootlegging and hijacking
jackbooting and highlegging
arsenic and old lace
robbing a hen-roost
leaving unattended bombs in unauthorised places
high dudgeon
the cod war
massacre of innocents
bed wetting
escapism
transporting Bibles without a licence

But *so many new punishments, too!*—
blinding with science
death by haranguing
licking of envelopes
palpation of the obvious
invasion of the privacies
fistula in ano
hard labour down the minds
solitary conjunction
mortification of the self-esteem
the Plastic Maiden
hat-rack and trouser-press
the death of a thousand budgerigars
spontaneous combustion
self-employment
retooling of the economy
jacks in orifice
boredom of the genitals
trampling by white elephants
deprivation of forgetfulness
loss of pen-finger
severance pay
strap-hanging
early closing
sequestration of the funny-bone
mortgage and deadlock

"Fair do's," murmured the old Adam, "I am well pleased."
He had come a long way since he named the animals.

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Walter Allen

The Roaring Queen

ON 14 APRIL 1936, in a letter to Father Martin D'Arcy, S.J., Wyndham Lewis wrote: "My short novel *The Roaring Queen* is also now finished and Capes are doing it." Five months later, the book was listed among the *New Statesman and Nation*'s selected novels for the autumn, but it does not seem to have been advertised either in that periodical or in *The Times Literary Supplement*, though advertising space was found for forthcoming novels by, among others, C. Day Lewis and Stevie Smith. Then, sometime in November, Lewis had a letter from G. Wren Howard, a director of the house of Cape, expressing concern about the possibilities of libel in the novel. Lewis replied, though it is not certain that the letter was ever sent:

> Libels I did not discuss (nor did you, although you are at least as well acquainted with the world I made fun of) because there is no libel there. But in any satire there is always the possibility—indeed almost the probability that someone or other (either with a grudge against the author, or with a keen business sense and a desire to turn an honest penny) will come forward and claim financial compensation for an alleged "libel". What happens then? The publisher, in nine cases out of ten, refuses to go to the court with it, however ill-founded the charge. He just hands over the money to the claimant, if necessary suppresses the book, and that is not only disagreeable for the publisher, but also for the author.
>
> Under these circumstances, and since I myself have been a conspicuous sufferer in that matter, it is only natural that I should wish to have your *absolute assurance* that there was nothing in my book that you would not be prepared to stand by. . . .
>
> Your letter, I need hardly say, is disingenuous. For to say in this particular case that you carefully read yourself and accept a book satirising the world in the midst of which you live—accept it in all good faith, so to speak—and then all of a sudden discover that it is swarming with atrocious libels, is plain nonsense.
>
> At the very start it was open to refuse the book at sight: to say to me: "Look here, I know the business in which I am engaged has its anomalies and absurdities, like all walks of life, but I am after all engaged in it, and I don't propose to publish satires about it. Besides, I might make myself unpopular with some of my eminent colleagues." That I should have entirely understood. Indeed, I told you that several publishers had refused it; that in the nature of things the *small* publisher would be afraid of publishing it for fear of offending his big colleagues, and that the big publisher would hardly feel very genial about it. . . .

In the event, though Lewis had passed the proofs, *The Roaring Queen* was not published, and the book world, which was the world Lewis was making fun of, has remained undisturbed by it for thirty-six years. Libel is a matter for lawyers, and whether *The Roaring Queen* was technically libellous I do not know. Most of the characters identifiable in the novel—or presumed by the curious to be identifiable, which is something else—must be dead by now, and some were dead in 1936. But it doesn't need much imagination or much knowledge of human behaviour to realise the controversy and the heat *The Roaring Queen* would have sparked off if it had appeared in 1936. Assuredly, all the characters would have been "recognised," however weak the evidence, and I find it puzzling to understand Cape accepting the novel in the first instance. There is, for example, the reference by an anonymous character to "Geoffrey Bell, who is reader for *Hector Gollywog and Ogpu*, who in his capacity of novel-critic of the *Sunday Messenger* writes the most glowing accounts of the books that reach him as critic from the firm to which he belongs, as reader." Anyone at Cape's must have known that this could refer only to the poet and journalist Gerald Gould, who was for years the chief novel-reviewer of the *Observer*.

Today, of course, after a third of a century, positive identification of the characters in *The Roaring Queen* is much less easy. The only people more quickly and easily forgotten than best-selling novelists are the journalists who review their works, and it is to these categories of human beings that the characters of the novel mainly belong. Indeed, when a positive identification of an original can be made, it can be made, except in one instance, only on the basis of some degree of specialised knowledge that the common reader is unlikely to have. For the other characters, one is largely in the realm of intelligent guess-work, since Lewis, as it seems to me, was often incorporating in a single character traits from more than one original and, still more often, was satirising not specific persons so much as trends he discerned in literary fashion and in the marketing of books.

The one unmistakable character, today as in 1936, is the central character, Samuel Shodbutt, who can only be Arnold Bennett, and a very

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funny caricature of Bennett at that. I think it an unfair one, but that is beside the point: one doesn't expect fairness in satire, and in any case Lewis believed he had justification for his satire. Bennett had in fact been dead five years before the novel was due to be published. Indeed, Lewis dates the action of the novel fairly specifically when he describes Shodbutt as a "Canute of 1930." That Shodbutt is meant to be Bennett is clinched by the fact that in the proof copy of the novel there is a page on which the initials A. B. appear instead of S. S.

The aspect of Bennett that Lewis is satirising is that described by Richard Hughes in an article in *Encounter* in 1963:[1] he is recalling the time when he discovered—and he was the first Englishman to do so—the early novels of William Faulkner:

> . . . Those were the days when Arnold Bennett was running his book-column each week in the *Evening Standard*. Bennett had then a greater influence on book-sales than any other critic before or since (people trusted him particularly because his critical style was so open and commonsensical: it was never his way to puff or over-praise a book, however much it had interested him). Being fresh from America, Bennett asked me one night at dinner what was new there, and scribbled the name "Faulkner" on his hard evening cuff.
>
> Apparently Bennett wrote off at once to New York ordering the entire Faulkner oeuvre.

Having got it, Bennett wrote a paragraph in his column, as a result of which *Soldier's Pay* and *Mosquitoes* were published in London with Hughes's memorable introductions.

Hughes represents an estimate of Bennett as a reviewer and a maker and breaker of reputations quite different from Lewis's. All they have in common is a recognition of Bennett's enormous power to persuade the reading public to read and perhaps to buy books. Nevertheless, Hughes's article throws some light on an episode in *The Roaring Queen*. When Rhoda Hyman tells how she had plagiarised the novel of an "unknown American" Shodbutt denies that there can be any such person:

> "The Americans are not allowed to neglect their authors—I see to that!" Shodbutt blustered, in a paroxysm of boastfulness. "That is fairly well known I think! They can neglect *ours* if they want to. That's another matter. I don't care about that—we do it ourselves!" He chuckled among his long rabbit teeth. "But I won't have them neglect theirs—and what's more they know it!"

It is one of the funniest passages in the novel, and with Richard Hughes's article beside one, one can see where Lewis could have got it from. Hughes quotes from Bennett's *Evening Standard* review of *Soldier's Pay:*

> Last year I made some fuss in this column concerning the young American novelist, William Faulkner, who had been mentioned to me in conversation by Richard Hughes, author of *A High Wind in Jamaica*. No American, and even no American publisher, whom I asked about Faulkner, had ever heard of him. I sent to New York for his books, but could get only one, *The Sound and the Fury*, and that not without difficulty. Strange that Americans have frequently to be told by Englishmen of their new authors!
>
> The first printed fuss made about Theodore Dreiser's first book was made by an Englishman. *Sister Carrie* fell flat in the United States until a review of it by myself was republished there. Then Americans said: "Who is this man Dreiser?" and *Sister Carrie* began to sell in America. That was thirty years ago. Yet Americans say that English critics sniff at American novels.

BUT WHY DID LEWIS single out Bennett as the target of his satire? In *Rude Assignment*, an autobiographical work published in 1950, he refers to the "era of puff and blurb in place of criticism" and says: "*That* started with Mr Arnold Bennett, when he turned reviewer and star-salesman for the publishers, and was the godfather of as fine a brood of third-rate 'masterpieces' as you could hope to find anywhere." He saw Bennett as the arch-representative of the commercialisation of literature, of the promotion of book-publishing to big business; though in *The Roaring Queen* he doesn't fail to make the distinction between Bennett the Edwardian novelist and Bennett the all-powerful book-reviewer.

Bennett had in fact been under criticism for several years before his death. Questionings of his achievement as a novelist were almost common form and were a product of what is now called the generation-gap, inevitable at a time when the novelists the young found exciting were Joyce and Lawrence. Bennett was conscious of this; as he wrote in a letter in 1928: "I have long been aware that some of the younger generation despise me. (The feeling is not mutual.)" Then, his public presentation of himself could easily be construed as comic and vulgar, self-complacent and Philistine. This side of him was summed up by the poet Roy Campbell, a friend of Lewis's, who wrote of him in 1928 that he "quite openly admits, in the *Evening Standard*, in his weekly tips to young poets, that he places his insurance policy, his clothes and his belly a long way before his brains: and that he considers it a far greater privilege to be Mr Bennett—and pay his grocer's bill, than to be Homer—and die in poverty." Indeed, as will become clear, a great deal of the comedy of *The Roaring Queen* and of its mechanisms is based upon these attitudes towards Bennett, which were far from being Lewis's alone.

[1] Richard Hughes, "Faulkner and Bennett", ENCOUNTER, September 1963.

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As early as 1920, for instance, he had appeared as Mr Nixon, the book-reviewer, in Ezra Pound's *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*—Pound was of course a close friend of Lewis's. Mr Nixon has gained a steam yacht from the proceeds of writing, as Bennett had done, and he assures Mauberley, "As for poetry, there is nothing in it," and advises him to "Follow me, and take a column," as he had done in the years before the first war in the *New Age*, to which both Pound and Lewis had contributed.

But beyond all this, there was a personal basis for Lewis's attack on Bennett, whom he believed had done him down over the years. In a letter to Hugh Walpole written in January 1920, Bennett describes a dinner-party at Osbert Sitwell's:

> Very good dinner and the most fantastic and hazardous service. Sickert was there. He is, I regret to say, becoming rather mannered; but his imitations of his old and intimate friend George Moore are still priceless. Wyndham Lewis was also there—in grey flannel. He left early—piqued, as some said, by remarks of Sickert.

Seventeen years later, we have Lewis's version of the dinner party in his autobiography, *Blasting and Bombardiering:*

> At this dinner-party Sickert began talking about *Tarr*. I could see Bennett didn't like it. I think Sickert saw that too, for he went on talking about it more and more, at every moment in more ecstatic terms. I did not engage in the conversation. I saw that Bennett was extremely annoyed; and when at last Sickert said: "Here we've been talking about it for a quarter of an hour. The author has said nothing. But I don't think it matters *what* we say about it, one way or the other!" Bennett threw himself back in his chair at this, and stammered out crossly, "Oh, I shouldn't say that. I shouldn't say that!"
>
> Naturally it was aggravating of Sickert to make Bennett talk about a "young author's" book for half an hour. For I saw only too well that as an old hand he had resented this ordeal. So much irresponsible jealousy had been more than he could stomach. *Tarr* had been made to stink in his nostrils. Bennett had an age-complex as big as a house. I knew that Sickert had made me an enemy though he hadn't meant to, for he is the kindest man in the world.

Lewis goes on:

> For a number of years Arnold Bennett was a kind of book-dictator. Every week in the pages of the *Evening Standard* he "dictated" what the Public should read. And more or less the Public obeyed. He was the Hitler of the book-racket. The book-trade said he could make a book overnight. If he praised it on Thursday evening, by the weekend it was selling like hot cakes. And he became inordinately proud of this accomplishment. He loved power in the way that a "captain of industry" loves power. . . .
>
> The "author of *Tarr*" under this Dictatorship spent his time in a spiritual concentration camp—of barbed silence. . . . This John Keats would have had much more porridge if this particular Hitler hadn't taken a dislike to the cut of his hair. If Letters were Life, I am persuaded, I should have been beheaded. My head would have "rolled in the sand."

Lewis concludes his account of the episode:

> As Sickert and I left the Sitwells that night (in 1922 or 3) I reproached him for having been so vehement with Bennett. But Sickert exclaimed against my retrospective objection. "Nonsense! Why shouldn't he hear it! Of course he should be told—that and a lot more! *Quel comédie*—that such people as Arnold Bennett should be in a position of that sort—it is only in an age like ours that they could be! That one should have to talk to such people about *books* at all! Why should one be asked to meet such people? It is absurd that a Bennett should be referred to, for anything except the time of a train or the cost of a bicycle lamp! Pfui!"

This outburst of Richard Sickert's should be set side by side with the comments on Shodbutt of the painter Richard Dritter. Dritter is plainly based on Sickert, who died in 1942, as is clear not only from the similarity of opinion and expression and certainly not because he is depicted as a painter with a beard, a detail which has led one unwary commentator on the novel to identify him with Augustus John, but also because of the reference to "his master, Whistler," like whom "he has a tongue to his credit as well as a brush."

THE ROARING QUEEN opens with Samuel Shodbutt, chief reviewer of *The Morning Outcry* and chairman of The Book of the Week Club, *en route* to a weekend party at Beverley Chase, the Oxfordshire mansion of the Wellesley-Crooks, there to meet the other potentates of the book-racket, the chairmen of rival book-clubs, other reviewers, authors and so on. Before the party is over he will announce the next week's choice of The Book of the Week Club. When he arrives, he meets many old enemies, prominent among them being Mrs Rhoda Hyman. Who is Mrs Hyman? Or rather, who is Mrs Hyman's original? I think there can be no doubt at all that she is, surprisingly, Mrs Virginia Woolf. I say surprisingly because she doesn't fit in in any way with what I suspect are our present impressions of Virginia Woolf. She is anything but a speaking likeness and is obviously not intended to be one; and the fact, as we are told, that her father was a literary journalist and that she has associations with Cambridge would certainly not be enough to pin the identity upon her. Yet she is based on Virginia Woolf all the same.

In his presentation of Rhoda Hyman Lewis is doing two things at once: he is dramatising Bennett's relationship with Virginia Woolf and also expressing his own reactions towards her. Bennett's attitude towards Virginia Woolf, and hers to him, was always ambivalent. In *The*

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Roaring Queen Shodbutt's first encounter with Rhoda begins:

> And if the gaze of Samuel Shodbutt fell more ponderously in one place than another, it oppressed, if anything, more peculiarly that drooping intellect-ravaged exterior of the lanky and sickly lady in Victorian muslins—the greater and more world-famous of the pair of mid-proud, vacantly staring—for no banns ever published would devirginate either of those colossal spinsters. Yes! there, beneath his very eyes, wilted pretentiously the very woman who had but a few months ago written a vile supercilious pamphlet all about Shodbutt. And it had been a very insulting piece of work indeed. So the highly finished languor of the patronising queen of the highbrow world (whose pen had but yesterday allowed itself to be facetious at the expense of the scribbling grocer puffed up into a Brummagem critical Lion) attracted the darkest sparks from his smouldering eye-socket—and Shodbutt's chin was puckered like a disgruntled patch of ocean ruffled into a snarling surface by a storm—and the drooping extremities of his moustache whiskered dankly the contemptuous corners of his mouth.

Well, Virginia Woolf had indeed written a pamphlet to do with Arnold Bennett, a pamphlet called *Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown*, published in 1924. It is very amusing. Mrs Woolf reports Bennett as having said "that there was no great novelist among the Georgian writers because they cannot create characters who are real, true and convincing, " and she adds: "And there I cannot agree." The Georgian writers are Mrs Woolf herself, Joyce, Lawrence, Forster, Lytton Strachey and T. S. Eliot, and the pamphlet is an attack on her immediate predecessors in the English novel, Bennett, Wells and Galsworthy. It is Bennett, because he has supplied her with her text, who has to bear the brunt of the attack. The Mrs Brown of the title is an old lady sitting in a railway carriage: she is human nature. "With all his powers of observation, which are marvellous," says Mrs Woolf, "with all his sympathy and humanity, which are great, Mr Bennett has never once looked at Mrs Brown in her corner." Bennett as a novelist is disposed of—in much the same way and to the same degree as the generation of novelists after her disposed of Virginia Woolf. But the difference between them was not simply a difference between generations: it was a difference between attitudes towards the art of the novel, and they were both conscious artists dedicated to their literary form. In this sense, they were enemies, for it seemed as though if one were right the other must be wrong. They attacked each other on aesthetic grounds.

At the personal level it was rather different, for there was at least a grudging respect on both sides. On 1 December 1930, they found themselves together at a dinner-party. It had been engineered, Virginia Woolf thought, by Bennett himself to enable him to "get on good terms" with her. She adds—it is from *A Writer's Diary*—"Heaven knows I don't care a rap if I'm on terms with B. or not." She goes on to tell how she drew Lord David Cecil into the conversation. "And we taunted the old creature into thinking us refined." It is not a pleasant piece of writing, but that the effect of the meeting on Mrs Woolf was considerable is shown by the fact that, recording it the day after, she says: "this left me in a state where I can hardly drive my pen across the page."

We have Bennett's account of the meeting. He wrote to his nephew: "Last night I was at Ethel Sands' and had a great pow-wow with Virginia Woolf. (Other guests held their breath to listen to us.) Virginia is all right." One gets the impression that in their encounter the "old creature," who was sixty-three as contrasted with Virginia Woolf's mere forty-eight, appeared much the more naïve of the two. But a year later, under the heading "Saturday, March 28th", we find this in Virginia Woolf's diary:

> Arnold Bennett died last night; which leaves me sadder than I should have supposed. A loveable genuine man; impeded, somehow a little awkward in life; well meaning; ponderous; kindly; coarse; knowing he was coarse; dimly floundering and feeling for something else; glutted with success; wounded in his feelings; avid; thicklipped; prosaic intolerably; rather dignified; set upon writing; yet always taken in; deluded by splendour and success; but naive; an old bore; an egotist; much at the mercy of life for all his competence; a shopkeeper's view of literature; yet with the rudiments, covered over with fat and prosperity and the desire for hideous Empire furniture, of sensibility. Some real understanding power, as well as a gigantic absorbing power. These are the sort of things that I think by fits and starts this morning, as I sit journalising. . . . Queer how one regrets the dispersal of anybody who seemed—as I say—genuine: who had direct contact with life—for he abused me; and yet I rather wished him to go on abusing me; and me abusing him. An element in life—even in mine that was remote—taken away. This is what one minds.

Lewis's attitude towards Virginia Woolf was, I think, much less complex than Bennett's. She was a member of "Bloomsbury," and his references to Bloomsbury are generally fairly contemptuous, both because it was part of the literary Establishment and because of his intellectual views. And then she was a friend of the art critic and painter Roger Fry, who Lewis all his life believed had done him down early in his career as a painter. Before writing *The Roaring Queen*, Lewis had already published a criticism of Virginia Woolf in his book, *Men Without Art*, in 1934. We know from her diary how concerned she was, before its publication, about what Lewis might have written of her. On Thursday, 11 October 1934, she writes:

> A brief note. In today's *Lit. Sup.*, they advertise *Men Without Art*, by Wyndham Lewis: chapters

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> on Eliot, Faulkner, Hemingway, Virginia Woolf. . . . Now I know by reason and instinct that this is an attack; that I am publicly demolished; nothing is left of me in Oxford and Cambridge and places where the young read Wyndham Lewis. My instinct is not to read it. . . . Why am I so sensitive? I think vanity: I dislike the thought of being laughed at: at the glow of satisfaction that A., B. and C. will get from hearing V.W. demolished. . . .

Three days later, she had either read Lewis's book or the reviews in the Sunday papers:

> This morning I've taken the arrow of W. L. to my heart: he makes tremendous and delightful fun of B. and B: calls me a peeper, not a looker; a fundamental prude but one of the four or five living (so it seems) who is an artist. That's what I gather the flagellation amounts to. . . . Well, this gnat has settled and stung: and I think (12.30) the pain is over. Yes, I think it's now rippling away. Only I can't write.

Nevertheless, for the next three weeks or so the references to Lewis and his book recur in her diary, and perhaps for good reason. On 19 October, Stephen Spender reviewed *Men Without Art* in the *Spectator* and wrote that Lewis had attacked Mrs Woolf with a "great deal of malice", which great deal of malice, Lewis believed, Spender found in his reference to "the obvious imitation of episodes in *Ulysses* to be met with in *Mrs Dalloway*." Lewis had written of these imitations:

> In our local exponents of this method there is none of the realistic vigour of Mr. Joyce, though often the incidents in the local "masterpieces" are exact and puerile copies of the scenes in his Dublin drama (cf. the Viceroy's progress through Dublin in *Ulysses* with the Queen's progress through London in *Mrs Dalloway*—the latter is a sort of undergraduate imitation of the former, winding up with a smoke-writing in the sky, a pathetic "crib" of the firework display and the rocket that is the culmination of Mr. Bloom's beach ecstasy).

This indebtedness of Mrs Woolf to Joyce, which cannot, I think, be denied, is surely the basis of Lewis's making Rhoda Hyman bestow on herself the diploma for The Year's Cleverest Literary Larceny. The comedy is the more farcical when we discover that the larceny is from an unknown American who, it is suggested at one point in the misunderstandings of conversation, may be Sinclair Lewis.

AND NOW WE ENTER into the realms of surmise. I doubt whether at this date other characters can be identified positively. The most one can do is to give reasons for intelligent guesses, in the full knowledge that the guesses may be utterly wrong. According to Mrs Wyndham Lewis, in a letter to the publisher, "Nancy Cunard was the main figure in the book." By this I assume she means Baby Bucktrout. Mrs Lewis goes on to say that "most certainly she did not object even if she had recognised her satirical portrait"; and it appears that after reading the novel, Miss Cunard wished to publish it at her Hours Press, in France. But Lewis needed an advance on royalties, which was against her practice as a publisher of small editions of *avant-garde* works.

In this, Nancy Cunard's behaviour towards Lewis seems to have been characteristic; but whether one would have spotted Baby as Nancy Cunard without Mrs Lewis's word for it I do not know. There are problems of chronology. In the novel, Baby is a girl in her late teens trying to seduce a young gardener with *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, which was published in 1928, as her primer. In fact, in 1930, the date of the action of the novel, Miss Cunard was 34. Certainly, in a rough-and-ready way, the presentation is in character. Miss Cunard, the daughter of the famous hostess Lady Cunard, was one of the great rebellious figures of the 'twenties and 'thirties, a beautiful woman notorious for her flouting of the conventions and her passionate support of left-wing causes, a bohemian when the word still had a meaning. She had known Lewis all her adult life and had sat to him for a portrait. The original of characters of many novels in the inter-war years, among her avatars are Iris March, in Michael Arlen's *The Green Hat*, and Lucy Tantamount, in Huxley's *Point Counter Point*. According to Daphne Fielding, in *Emerald and Nancy*, a memoir of Miss Cunard and her mother, Nancy suffered as a child under the tyranny of a governess named Scarth: one is tempted to equate this lady with Lewis's Miss Corse, who carries Nancy, kicking and biting, under her beefy arm when she is discovered riding piggy-back on the young gardener. And though the seduction episode, with its satire on Lawrence's novel, needs no explanation, it is tempting to relate it to an incident in Nancy's girlhood. According to Daphne Fielding, Miss Scarth discovered that she was reading Elinor Glyn's novel, *Three Weeks*, the wicked book of the period. "A frightful rumpus" ensued, from which Nancy was rescued only by the intervention of her mother's great admirer, George Moore.

However, if we can identify Baby Bucktrout with Miss Cunard then we may have some tenuous clue to the identity of the Roaring Queen himself, Donald Butterboy, the homosexual undergraduate whose novel, *It Takes Two to Make a Bedroom-Scene*, is to be Shodbutt's next choice of The Book Of The Week Club. Butterboy is presented so much as the undifferentiated stereotype of the effeminate young man, the "flaunting, extravagant queen" as one might

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say, that he could have been based on any number of young men and young novelists of the time. But the modern reader will probably think first of the late Brian Howard, mainly because it is in him that the stereotype of the homosexual as we know it now is most plainly seen. Michael Holroyd in his life of Lytton Strachey sums him up: "Wit, poet, critic and friend of the famous, Brian Howard dazzled Eton, Oxford and London during the 'twenties and 'thirties by his exotic manner of living and of conversation." He appears in the novels of Evelyn Waugh as Ambrose Silk in *Put Out More Flags* and as Anthony Blanche in *Brideshead Revisited*, and Waugh describes him in his autobiography as "mad, bad and dangerous to know." He did in fact write a poem called "Two It Takes to Make a Flower," but, alas, it was not written until seven years after Lewis wrote *The Roaring Queen*. Had the novel not been suppressed, it is more than likely that Howard would have reviewed it, since at the time he was one of the fiction-reviewers on the *New Statesman and Nation*. I did not know him, but since he praised my own first novel generously I am bound to think he was a good reviewer. He had also, as a boy of fifteen at Eton, published a satirical piece that takes swipes at Lewis in the *New Age*. There was obviously much more to Howard than appears in Donald Butterboy.

The possible clue to Butterboy's identity is that in the novel Baby Bucktrout is reluctantly engaged to him. I am pretty sure that Nancy Cunard was never engaged to Brian Howard, but that they were close friends is certain. Indeed, at one time, according to Daphne Fielding, she declared that she loved him "in every possible way." Miss Fielding goes on:

> Though he admired her beauty and respected her idealism, the knowledge of her being physically in love with him was distinctly uncomfortable. As he told his mother, "Nothing could deter her or make her dishonest. . . . If she were younger and less ill and attracted me, I'd marry her, I almost believe."

She published his poems from The Hours Press.

Baby is the niece of Mrs Wellesley-Crook, the great hostess of Beverley Chase; and since Beverley Chase is located in Oxfordshire I suppose the mind inevitably turns first to thoughts of Garsington and Lady Ottoline Morrell. I am certain Lady Ottoline was not the model for Mrs Wellesley-Crook, and it seems to me likely that many hostesses went to her making. Part of her, though, is probably derived from Nancy's mother Lady Cunard. Like Lady Cunard, Mrs Wellesley-Smith is American in origin. Lady Cunard came from San Francisco: Mrs Wellesley-Crook has been a "Crook of Chicago, with a verandaed chateau in the South, in the Old Dominion, where she was connected with the aristocratic Blackwood Toyts." Lewis had known Lady Cunard for the greater part of his life and in *Blasting and Bombardiering* he writes of her with considerable warmth. Their first association seems to have been in 1914, when Lewis was running the Rebel Art Centre with the painters C. R. W. Nevinson, Cuthbert Hamilton and Edward Wadsworth. Lady Cunard commissioned them to decorate some handkerchiefs, scarves, candles and fans to be used as favours at a party. It appears to have been the only commission the Rebel Art Centre was offered. Later, during the first war, when Lewis was a subaltern on leave from Flanders, he attended Lady Cunard's dinner-parties and on one occasion, according to Peter Quennell, he was invited to luncheon to meet the Prince of Wales. It must have been a memorable occasion:

> Wyndham Lewis accepted the invitation, contrary to his usual practice; but he was taciturn and pensive and self-absorbed, and, as soon as they had sat down to luncheon, produced from his pocket a small pearl-handled revolver, which he placed beside his wine-glasses. Did he mean to assassinate the Prince? Was it his intention to commit suicide? At all events, a crisis threatened; disengaging herself from the guest of honour, she turned her attention at the first opportunity to Mr Wyndham Lewis's "pretty little pistol," admiring its workmanship and the elegance of the design, handling it as if it had been a Fabergé Easter Egg or an enamelled Georgian snuff-box, at length with an absent-minded smile dropping the weapon into the bag she carried; after which she turned to the Prince and resumed her social duties.

AT THIS POINT, the quest for identification must stop. There is, for instance, little Nancy Cozens, aged eleven-and-a-half, the author of *Bursting Ripe*, which, on the strength of Samuel Shodbutt's review, had sold twenty-five thousand on the day of publication. Of course we think of Daisy Ashford, whose *The Young Visitors* had been introduced by Sir James Barrie. But *The Young Visitors* was published in 1919, and Nancy Cozens is in no real way modelled on Daisy Ashford. Lewis was cramming into *The Roaring Queen*, set in 1930, all his observations of publishing gained in a lifetime of writing. But one sees how his mind worked, and it was the mind of the comic writer. The foil to Nanzy Cozens is the four-times widowed, eighty-six-year-old Mrs Boniface, whose *Footsteps in the Sand* had won the Best First Novel of the Year Award. The fact of the infant prodigy had bred, as it were, the notion of the senile prodigy.

Other characters, like Osorio Potter, seem to me to be like minor figures who have strayed out of Lewis's much more important satire on the

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world of the arts, *The Apes of God. The Roaring Queen* is a farcical footnote to that work, a footnote in which he takes satirical swipes at the trends in literature and society that he disapproves of, the cults of the detective novel, the tough Western, the homosexual novel, the youth cult, the Negro cult. All are summarily parodied; as too is the form of the novel itself, which is the Peacockian novel of Aldous Huxley.

As a novel, *The Roaring Queen* obviously has no great distinction. It is a *jeu d'esprit*, a squib, but it is authentic Lewis, and only he could have written it. It goes along at a spanking pace and it is very funny, not only as a cartoon of the book world of the day but, more precisely, as a caricature of one of its most famous inhabitants. Shodbutt is in character throughout, and in his rendering of him Lewis reaches considerable comic heights. Witness the scene in which Shodbutt and his wife discuss how he came to choose *It Takes Two to Make a Bedroom-Scene* as the Book of the Week:

> "It was the last line that decided me. It carried me off my feet."
> "Mine too!"
> "The last line. On the last page. I said *This is the goods.* And I'm not often wrong. I could tell it at a glance."
> "There was the one in the middle. . . ."
> "I remember! It went deeply—*a line only.* Marvellous. I never read the middle of a book. . . . I never read more than the last page. Balzac said he knew what a book was like without even opening it. I can't say that—that's more than I can claim—I take off my hat to Balzac. He was a *genius*! No. I have to *open* them. It's no use—I admit it, I have to open them. But I never need to go further than the last page. . . . If that doesn't stir me I just shut it up with a bang, and mark it N. G. But give me the last page—and I'm infallible. Infallible.
> "You would be infallible even if you never opened. . . ."
> "No. No. Balzac—*Balzac*! Not me! I take off my hat to Balzac! I must *open* it!"
> "You do yourself an injustice."
> "No. I can't tell if a book has genius unless I open it. No, Joanie—not without opening it."
> "But Sam, darling, often you *haven't*. It has been sufficient for me to *tell* you, in a nutshell. . . ."
> "That is true. Nutshell. Yes!"
> "It is perfectly marvellous the way *the slightest hint*—why one word sometimes is enough. I have known you to decide upon the title alone."
> "That is true, yes. There have been times. I have often done that. A title—I *have* done it with only the title. But that's risky, Joanie! Risky!"
> "I think your flair is unbelievable! I am positive that if you told Balzac the little I have sometimes told you, he could never have been able to judge unerringly—to judge as you have always done. Not even Flaubert could!"
> "Ah *Flaubert*! I take off my hat to Flaubert! Flaubert was a genius! He would have told at once—even if the book had never been written."
> "I believe he could! But so could you—you know you could. . . ."

There, it seems to me, we see unmistakably Lewis's affinities as a comic writer with Dickens and Ben Jonson.

Mortimer Forest

All afternoon the drone of a saw has fanned
with resin over this bank of vibrating pines;
with each completed sever, falling an octave,
the one, only, sound of another human
in all dead, hot, black Mortimer Forest.

I have seen the place; clearing, sawdust, tarpaulin,
pipe-dottle, that is all, never the man.

If it stops now and I go there I will find,
to mark hard work for so long, long weeping ranks,
curtailed, seasoning in glutinous tiers,
and dust, dust red wood-ants perpetually sift.

Peter Reading

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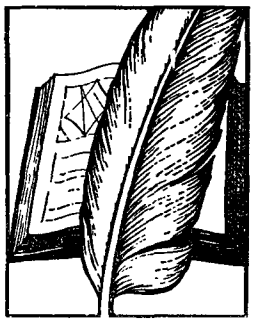

Column

READING *Wittgenstein's Vienna* by Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin[1] has revived many memories for me. In particular it has reminded me of what I have always felt to be the intellectual puzzle of how the intense intellectual ferment of Vienna at the turn of the century could be reconciled with the social and political decadence of the last years of the Habsburg Empire. Vienna was and remained that city in which the situation was always "desperate but not serious", the capital of an empire which was only barely held together by a petrified bureaucracy which continued to preserve, in the 20th century, the traditions and procedures of the 18th. It was also the city of Johann Strauss and Franz Lehar, in which an empire crumbled into ruins to the strains of the *Blue Danube* and the *Merry Widow* waltz and tragedy found its most characteristic art form in musical comedy.

Yet at the same time Vienna was the city of Freud and Mahler, of Karl Kraus and Kokoschka, of Loos and Schnitzler and Breuer and Brückner and Victor Adler and Schönberg and Musil, a centre of intellectual and creative activity which has left an indestructible mark on the culture of this century and whose influence has even yet not been exhausted. It was the city which Karl Kraus described as "a laboratory of world destruction", and indeed in the scientific developments which finally led to the creation of the weapon which made the destruction of mankind a practical possibility Vienna played no small part. In the contrast between the political decay and sterility of the Habsburg Empire and the intellectual and artistic vitality of its capital city there lies a paradox which will, I think, continue to interest the historian for many years to come.

I myself first became dimly and vaguely aware of the problem when as a young man just down from Oxford I lived for a time in Vienna in the early 'thirties. By that time the Habsburg Empire had vanished without trace and had become as much a thing of the distant past as the Holy Roman Empire of which it was the successor. And Vienna had shrunk from an Imperial city, *Kaiserlich-und-Königlich,* into the capital of a tiny state which was hardly more than a province. Yet even in its decline it had still given evidence that it was something more than a provincial capital. The collapse of its largest bank, the Kredit-Anstalt, had provoked reactions in every financial centre in the world and had sent statesmen and financiers scurrying from capital to capital in a desperate attempt to shore up a financial structure that was visibly disintegrating before their eyes. For Austria, as for the world, the results were catastrophic and set in motion forces which put an end to her existence as an independent state.

TO A VISTOR LIKE MYSELF, as indeed to many of the citizens of Vienna, the significance of such events was largely concealed because Vienna at that time was still a Socialist city and its municipality was one of the most advanced and progressive administrations in the world. The working-class flats of the Karl-Marx-Hof seemed a guarantee that Vienna would be the scene, not of Karl Kraus's Last Days of Mankind, but of the triumph of Social Democracy and all the hopes that were attached to it. But in Vienna, as elsewhere in Europe, the 'thirties were to see not the triumph but the liquidation of Socialism, and already in the Austrian provinces the forces were gathering which soon would shell the Karl-Marx-Hof and blow the municipality to bits. I should have taken warning from my German teacher, a young Viennese of reactionary and homosexual tastes, who looked forward to such events with the keenest anticipation.

AND YET, THOUGH THE FINGER OF DOOM was already on Vienna, it still remained a city of intense intellectual activity which had the power to attract visitors from all over the world. Freud still walked the streets of the city; of my undergraduate friends one, Martin Cooper, hurried out to study music under Anton Webern and was followed by another, A. J. Ayer, to attend the philosophical discussions and seminars of the Vienna Circle before returning to Oxford to write *Language, Truth and Logic* and proclaim the death of metaphysics. There was plenty of other evidence that Vienna maintained its intellectual and artistic vitality. One evening, the landlady of the *pension* where I lived, an establishment which except for me seemed exclusively patronised by Lesbians undergoing psychoanalysis, invited me to dinner. There were only two other guests, both male and both older than I, one frail and gentle, with an extraordinary look of passionate intensity in his eyes, the other vigorous and thickset; there was something about his sharp, decisive sentences, his energetic delivery, that reminded me of C. M. Bowra. Throughout the evening the two kept up a protracted and hotly-debated discussion with each

[1] Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £5·25.

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other. The subject, pursued through a variety of forms, was the value of a classical as opposed to a modern education, and I remember that I, who after Oxford thought myself well-versed in such a topic, was astonished by the knowledge, the subtlety, the dialectical skill with which the argument was pursued. They seemed to put any conversation I heard at Oxford into the shade.

I had not caught the names of my fellow guests when we were introduced and spent the evening in ignorance of their identity, though increasingly convinced that they were two of the most remarkable men I had ever met. When they left I asked my hostess who they were and to my astonishment learned that the one was Herr Alban Berg, whose *Wozzeck* I already admired, and the other Herr Ernst Křenek, the Czech composer of *Jonny Spielt Auf*. It seemed a fairly normal evening for Vienna.

WITH SUCH MEMORIES, it is perhaps not surprising that I should have been fascinated by *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, for Wittgenstein also is among those whose genius flowered in that city. Indeed, the authors have chosen him as the typical and representative product of the cultural situation in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, and if they are right in doing so it is only further proof of the intellectual debt which we owe to it.

For Englishmen this is particularly true, for it can reasonably be said that Wittgenstein has had a greater influence on British philosophic thinking than any other philosopher of the last 50 years; indeed, that the very concept of "doing philosophy" as a self-contained intellectual activity, which has so powerfully affected British philosophical thought, is primarily the result of his influence.

That influence indeed has been so great that, despite his alien (and how very alien!) origins, he has been almost unconsciously adopted as a British philosopher, to be interpreted in the light of the British philosophical tradition, and to a large extent confirming and advancing it. This view has naturally been strengthened by his close personal and professional relations with Russell and Moore and the fact that the greater part of his career as a teacher of philosophy was spent at Cambridge; it is as if he had been granted British intellectual naturalisation papers. In practice this has meant that his only completed philosophical work, the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, has been interpreted as an investigation into the logic of language and this interpretation, the authors of *Wittgenstein's Vienna* say, "has gathered weight from the fact that logical positivists like Carnap and Ayer clutched the work to their bosoms and treated it as an empirical bible. . . ."

This view, the authors contend, is a fundamental misreading both of Wittgenstein's meaning and his purpose in the *Tractatus*, which can only be understood, not as an investigation into language, but primarily as a treatise on ethics, or rather, on the possibility of ethics and what the nature of that possibility is. From this point of view the famous and enigmatic sentence *"Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen* (What we cannot speak about must be left in silence)" is not a denial of all forms of truth that are not susceptible of logical verification. It is, rather, a statement of the limits implicit in the logical structure of language. In this sense, philosophy was for Wittgenstein neither an enquiry into the nature of knowledge nor an investigation into the nature of language; it was a kind of preliminary work of intellectual sanitation and healing which, if properly conducted, left a man free, without self-deception, to exercise, in ethics, in the arts, perhaps in religion, those creative faculties which cannot express themselves in logical form.

The thesis of *Wittgenstein's Vienna* is that such an attitude can only be understood against the cultural background of Vienna at the turn of the century, of which Wittgenstein himself was a product; indeed, that without an understanding of that culture we shall necessarily distort his meaning. He was trying, that is to say, to do for philosophy what Schönberg tried to do for music, or Karl Kraus for literature and drama, or Loos for architecture, or others for the philosophy of science and language; or rather, perhaps, he was trying to achieve a hypothesis which would validate all these efforts, including his own.

I AM NOT PHILOSOPHICALLY COMPETENT to judge whether *Wittgenstein's Vienna* is in fact correct in its interpretation of Wittgenstein, or whether, if it were, its conclusions are philosophically valid. What I feel justified in saying is that its account of what Wittgenstein aimed at corresponds much more closely to what we know of his life and character than to any attempt to represent him as a natural heir, however great, of British empirical philosophy.

We have, after all, to take himself and his life into account; Mr Janik and Professor Toulmin would say that this means we must take Vienna into account. He was the man who, as a hospital orderly on the Russian front in the First World War, was known as "the Man of the Gospels" because of his habit of carrying with him everywhere Tolstoy's version of the New Testament. He regarded both Tolstoy and Kierkegaard as ethical geniuses who were at home in worlds which were outside the province of philosophy. He adored early Western films, and never missed

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a chance of seeing one, and thought that no one else should do so—because of their ethical content. His view of the status and significance of philosophy is perhaps illustrated by a remark of his about a colleague at Trinity College, Cambridge: "So-and-so thinks he understands Blake —he doesn't even understand philosophy." He dissuaded his most intimate disciples, of whom he admitted very few, from adopting philosophy as a career and tried to persuade them to engage in useful disciplines like medicine and engineering. The son of a multi-millionaire, he gave away his very large patrimony; one of the many who benefited by his altruism was the poet Rainer Maria Rilke.

It is very hard indeed to believe that such a man can be fitted into the narrow confines of British empirical philosophy as, alas! it has come to be today, and I cannot help feeling that in emphasising the abyss which separates him from it, *Wittgenstein's Vienna* has served a most admirable purpose.

IT IS A FAR CRY from Vienna at the beginning of the century to Leamington in the 'twenties. Why do I think that Wittgenstein would have entirely understood, and sympathised with, everything that D. J. Enright has tried to say, to my mind marvellously, in his new book of poems, *The Terrible Shears*?[2] It has as a sub-title "Scenes from a Twenties Childhood"—and this is precisely what it is: a sequence of short poems registering some of the feelings and experiences of a working-class child who grew up in Leamington after the First World War and ended his schooldays by winning a scholarship to Cambridge. Perhaps, after all, Cambridge is the link between them.

The wife of a teacher at school (she was
Mother of one of my classmates) was
Genuinely enraged when I won a scholarship.
She stopped me in the street, to tell me
(With a loudness I supposed was upper-class)
That Cambridge was not for the likes of me, nor was
Long hair, nor the verse I wrote for the school mag.

Her sentiments were precisely those of the
Working class. Unanimity on basic questions
Accounts for why we never had the revolution.

Mr Enright's vision of childhood, perhaps not unnaturally because he was a child of urban poverty, is very different from Henry Vaughan's "Happy those early days when I shined' in my angel-infancy!" To the child of an immigrant Irishman, the Midlands did not give the kind of security enjoyed by children who grow up in the places which belonged to their fathers:

In the early Fifties we were the only
Foreign family in the hamlet of Okamoto.
At times an old crone would recoil
In the market, a baby howl with terror.
But the natives were very kind to us.

In my childhood there was only one
Black family in Leamington.
The natives were kind to them,
They were better-behaved than the Irish.

But even for the alien and the immigrant there were ways to respectability.

Mind you, this blackie was a postman;
As was my father, a mick.
Postmen were saintly figures in those days.
They were paid with cups of tea and kindly words.

Mr Enoch Powell should read these poems. They may remind him, after all a poet himself, that there is more than one view of race relations even in the Midlands and that there were immigrants into England long before Pakistan was a state.

My father claimed to be descended from a king
Called Brian Boru, an ancient hero of Ireland.

My mother said that all Irishmen claimed descent
From kings but the truth was they were Catholics.

We would have preferred to believe our father.
Experience had taught us to trust in our mother.

I hope I have quoted enough to convey the *tone* of Mr Enright's poems, in which irony and wit are at one with deep feeling, and a highly complex and sophisticated personality finds expression in a deceptively natural and simple language. Somehow Mr Enright has managed to combine a flat Midlands accent with rhythms of almost Chinese subtlety. I hope also I have said enough to encourage others to read his book, about which, I think, one could say quite truthfully that it deals in those things about which one could say nothing if poetry did not exist. Anyone who does so will, I am sure, derive from his poems the same great pleasure which they have given me.

But I am sure Mr Enright would not like me to leave the impression that his poems are merely a record of old unhappy far-off things, so perhaps I might quote his poem "Happiness":

Yes, of course there were happy times,
It was not a succession of disasters.

(Once we went to Weston-super-Mare: the sea
Had apparently retreated to Leamington.)

The happiness you must take as read,
The writing of it is so difficult.

R

[2] Chatto & Windus, £1.60.

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THEATRE

Chekhov & Chekhovian

By John Weightman

MR EDWARD BOND had never struck me before as being near to Chekhov, yet the only way I could understand his new play, *The Sea*, when I saw it a little while ago at the Royal Court, was to take it as an exercise in Chekhovian symbolic comedy-drama, enlivened by touches from the Theatre of the Absurd (which are not out of keeping, since Chekhov himself can also be read as an early poetic Absurdist). Now that my impressions of *The Cherry Orchard* have been refreshed by the current production at the Old Vic, I am confirmed in this view.

It will be unfortunate for my thesis if Mr Bond's opinion of Chekhov is, in fact, as negative as the comments on Shakespeare he made in a TV interview at the time of his *Lear*. But, being ignorant of his attitude, I can develop my analysis with academic serenity. It seemed to me that one could compare *The Sea* and *The Cherry Orchard* as being in the same category. Both plays are really metaphysical, in the sense that they show a small, representative community of characters against the background of the incomprehensible universe and, in either case, the mystery of nature is located in a central symbol, the orchard in Chekhov (which also functions simultaneously as a social symbol) and the pounding, threatening waves in Bond. The sensation of natural processes extending well beyond the characters, and of which they themselves are an imperfectly conscious part, is essential to both plays and gives them poetic resonance.

However, I call Mr Bond's play an "exercise", because it has something of the pastiche about it. It is not held together, as *The Cherry Orchard* is, by an overall act of the imagination rooted in the writer's present. Mr Bond has adopted the curious device of setting the action in turn-of-the-century England, that is, precisely in the Chekhovian period, perhaps through deference to the tradition of symbolic theatre, or perhaps because his main characters—a domineering lady of the manor, her recessive/aggressive lady companion, a paranoiac draper, an alcoholic, philosophic tramp, a nice young man, etc.—could be made more definite in that semi-archaic society. Social types seem less clearly outlined today, and in particular village life no longer offers the close pattern of relationships that can be turned into a microcosm, like the complex household of *The Cherry Orchard*.

But the fact remains that pre-1914 England is without the vital immediacy of the present, and yet not far enough away to allow Mr Bond to operate wholly in the non-time of myth, using mythic figures to represent the here and now. The characters of *The Cherry Orchard* were exactly of Chekhov's day, and he pinpointed them so delicately that they stepped at once into myth, where they are still alive and kicking, seventy years later. I do not foresee such a future for Mr Bond's play, although I greatly enjoyed certain parts of it. It had a slight air of animated wax-works. The performance was excellent—better, I should say, than that of the Old Vic's *Cherry Orchard*—but the actors were helping the play along, whereas at the Old Vic the play tended to shine through and beyond the acting.

THIS IS HOW I understand Mr Bond's plot and the comparison with Chekhov. The basic movement is arrival and departure, a theatrical pattern that rarely fails. Willy, the nice young man, is washed ashore in Act I, Scene I, by the roaring waves and becomes involved in the life of the town. By the end of the play, he has found himself a mate, and the couple is ready to leave for fresh fields of endeavour, rather in the manner of Anya and Trofimov.

In both plays, incidentally, this is the weakest point. Given the universal absurdity of the world, which is amply illustrated in both, there is no "new" place to which youth can go to lead a totally new life, although the hope springs eternal. Chekhov avoids sentimentality by showing Trofimov in an ironical light. His cry of "Work! work!", coming from so feckless a person, is comparable to the longing for Moscow in *The Three Sisters*. "Work! work!" is a pure expression of Existentialist *project*, just as "To Moscow!

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To Moscow!" is really equivalent to Baudelaire's "Anywhere out of the world!" Chekhov understands the aspiration, but shows its tragic undertones. Mr Bond, being for once less astringent, allows a warm, theatrical glow to play over the couple as they move off into the future. His "absurd" play ends with exactly the sort of reconciliation with the Absurd that would be heartily condemned by the present generation of neo-Absurdists in Paris.

IN BOTH *The Sea* and *The Cherry Orchard*, awareness of the Absurd is touched off by a drowning. Mme Ranevskaya began to break up after her son, Grisha, was drowned in the river; Willy's best friend perished when their boat capsized, leaving Willy to reflect on the random operations of the universe. Why should he have survived? What is he to say to his best friend's fiancée? In effect, with the help of the philosophic tramp, he says: "Life is incomprehensible and appalling, but we have to try to live it positively. Come away with me." And, generally speaking, Mr Bond uses the ceaseless beating of the sea, which opens the play and recurs at intervals throughout the action, as an image of the relentless operation of cause and effect, that is, as a representation of the impersonal law of the universe, which takes no account of human emotions. For instance, the philosophic tramp, who acts as a kind of chorus (his opposite number in *The Cherry Orchard* would be Firs), lives in a hut on the beach, presumably to be as near as possible to the pointless ebb and flow of causality, as a saint will elect to live near the plague.[1]

Within the town, the two main characters are Mrs Rafi, the domineering lady, and Hatch, a paranoiac draper, who, because of commercial anxiety and the general cussedness of the universe, is rapidly going mad. He thinks that the drowning of Willy's friend is an episode in an invasion from outer space. He suspects Willy of being a secret agent, and is trying to organise the coast-guards into a defence corps. Mrs Rafi, for her part, counters the Absurd by ceremony—a charity performance of the Orpheus legend to raise money for the coast-guards, and a solemn scattering of the drowned young man's ashes from a cliff-top to the accompaniment of hymns. She says explicitly at one point that bullies like herself are necessary to give spice and a semblance of order and meaning to the dim lives of the bullied, and her relationship with her companion, Mrs Tilehouse, is an excellent illustration of the subject/object tension as explained in Existentialist psychology.

ALTHOUGH MRS RAFI AND HATCH are both reacting to the Absurd, one by asserting her authority and the other by demented violence, they are at loggerheads and exacerbate each other's tendencies. They struck me as having a strange inverted correspondence to Mme Ranevskaya and Lopakhin. Whereas Ranevskaya is feminine, all too feminine, and Lopakhin, an embodiment of masculine common sense, is trying to save her in spite of herself, Mrs Rafi has to assume a masculine role—because Hatch is going mad and the Vicar, who should be in charge of the metaphysics of the situation, is a silly ass. There are other parallels too. Charlotta, the gherkin-eating German governess, who was born in a circus and who does tricks to affirm her existence, is an obvious *étrangère*, existing pathetically in a vacuum (the gherkins should no doubt be seen as security-nibbles). Mrs Tilehouse, the persecuted lady-companion, who is always modestly asserting herself and who decorates the hymn-tunes with flamboyant variations, is a genteel version of the same predicament.

THE ABSURDIST PREOCCUPATION with the object also occurs in both plays. In *The Cherry Orchard*, Gaev makes a speech to the bookcase, investing it with all the aura of the pathetic fallacy, and then he shrugs his shoulders, apologises and allows the piece of furniture to revert to the status of indifferent matter. In *The Sea*, Hatch, the draper, becomes involved with yards of curtain velvet, which act as a symbol of his diminishing ability to control the relationship between his mind and the outside world. Waves of blue velvet ripple over his counter and he hacks away at them in a demented rage. I don't know whether Mr Bond actually intended a cross-reference to the sea and to what one might call the Canute syndrome, but the neurotic-phenomenological implication can certainly be read into the scene.

WHAT IS MISSING from *The Sea*, I feel, is a central apprehension which would bring the social and metaphysical elements into a coherent whole, as is the case in *The Cherry Orchard*. When one looks back on the play, it tends to break up into effective scenes and duller passages with some overt preaching from the tramp. And even the most successful parts cannot always be reacted to fully as serious black humour

[1] The superficial, and then the deeper, reaction to the sea is rhythmically expressed in the following extract from Andy Warhol's famous interview with David Bailey: "Uh, oh, oh, yes, I guess I walk along the ocean because it's so quiet and peaceful and, and, and, you get away from all the drugs in New York . . . and the ocean is uh, uh, it's, it's sort of the biggest abstract thing around".

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since, as I have suggested, the characters are more like stereotypes than newly minted, modern conceptions; and some of the details may have been put in at random.

The outstanding scene is the episode on the cliff-top, when the ceremony of the scattering of the ashes, which Mrs Rafi is trying to turn into a grand occasion with appropriate rhetoric and gesture, goes wrong through the wayward behaviour of Mrs Tilehouse and the irruption of mad Hatch. The basic point, presumably, is that ritual meant to impose human limits on the Absurd in full view of the sea is destroyed by the erratic determinism of human nature, which is another kind of wave pulsation. Coral Browne as Mrs Rafi and Gillian Martell as Mrs Tilehouse carried off this scene with superb aplomb.

As for *The Cherry Orchard*, one can see why it is a durable masterpiece. Symbols and characters interlock perfectly with many a subtle touch. The orchard in bloom is behind Ranevskaya herself to emphasise the rich and blossomy aspect of her nature, the lost world of childhood when poetry was intact, and the decline of a certain kind of Russia. It is interesting that Chekhov, who was consciously so strongly in favour of technology and work, should have had such an intense appreciation of the aristocratic, pastoral ideal that technology and work were about to destroy. Even his Lopakhin is an upstart with sensitivity who sees that he is substituting efficiency and common sense for less tangible values, which are to be driven into exile; and rightly so, since they cannot defend themselves.

Nature produces these strange flowerings of culture and then withdraws them again, as it creates bizarre and beautiful species and then destroys them in the continuing and meaningless process of evolution. In showing this, Chekhov is not sentimental and quaint, but—as Mr Ronald Hingley says in the introduction to his excellent translation—is "an elusive, subtle, detached and coolly appraising artist." However, the fault of this production is that it takes the coolness rather too literally and, through fear perhaps of letting the old Russian soul rip, underplays the text. Constance Cummings is, physically, exactly right for the part of Ranevskaya and she gives it all her usual skill; yet, with strange self-denial, she misses out the *prima-donna*-ish, larger-than-life-because-symbolic quality that the role requires. Ranevskaya is surely meant as a big, untidy blossom, on the borderline between soulfulness and vulgarity, with whom all the men, except "twenty-calamities" Epikhodov, are more or less in love. If she is played as a well-bred woman of average sensibility, there is no reason to believe that the doomed household should revolve around her as completely as it does. To borrow another image from nature, she is the queen bee, Old Russia summed up in a feminine symbol, and when she flies off, a certain way of living "from the soul" will have been lost, if not for good, at least for the foreseeable future. Miss Cummings should have abandoned restraint and allowed us to shed a tear.

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Alan Brownjohn

Sporting Event

Wimbledon. Centre Court. Blank and pitiless sun. Many
Eyes misted with, as it were, emotion.

The "Old Fox" is playing young Kenny Trabner of Australia.
The Old Fox sticks to a baseline game, Trabner is
Up at the net for the volleys, leaning back
At unthinkable angles for the smashes. Cunning,
And age, and experience, facing
All the burnished arrogance of youth, Trabner
Playing the ruthless tennis they play now,
And things not going too well at all for the Old Fox.

Trabner, too, in immaculate shorts and crew-cut,
The Old Fox in full-length, pre-war flannels, bald,
And wearing a green eye-shade on his forehead above his bifocals;
But the crowd is on his side.

Can the Old Fox do it this time, *can* the Old Fox do it again?
Things don't look too well. First set
To Trabner, 6–0. Second set
To Trabner, 6–0. It is crafty tactic the Old Fox is trying.
Third set, Trabner leading 5–0 and 40–0 in the sixth game,
On his own service.

This will need all the Old Fox can pull out, but
Throughout his career the Old Fox has somehow been
Strangely able to pull something out,
So to speak, in moments of crisis.

Now the crowd is utterly still, now the princess
Fingers the Cup, in the Royal Box, with excitement that mounts weirdly.
Trabner
Is serving for the match, three balls bunched
In one broad hand, and
The first ball lifts. And as
The thunderous, upward, apparently final trajectory
Of Trabner's racquet begins, the Old Fox
Pulls out from the pocket of his flannel trousers
An ancient matchlock pistol such as might be hired
For commercial TV serials about the Jacobite Rebellion,
And fires.
Trabner falls. The crowd is on ten thousand delirious,
Cheering, swooning feet. With a last
Expenditure of feeling the princess accidentally shudders
the Cup from its plinth.
The Old Fox leaps the net and shakes Trabner's dying hand.
The newsmen, as they are said to do, crowd round.
The umpire calls out, "Game, Set, Match and Championship to the OLD FOX."

Max Robertson says, "Yes, the Old Fox has done it again."

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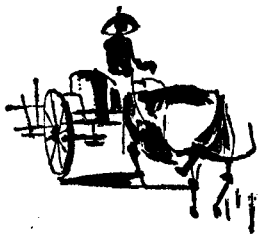
NOTES & TOPICS

Letter from Kuala Lumpur

Of Race, Class & I.Q.

By Peter Schmid



THE HOTEL MALAYA, where I am staying, is a modern concrete block towering over the Chinese town and, if I open the window, a waft of incense rises from the temple below. But this is the only trace of ceremony to be found among these picturesquely vaulted roofs with their carved dragons or monsters. In the temple square the loud-speaker blares out pop music and, on the right-hand side, a Ministry of Information depot doles out propaganda literature. It is intended to give the Chinese of Malaysia a taste for the new official philosophy, "*Rukunegara*", whose object, concealed behind such fine phrases as "national unity" and "abolition of poverty", is to break their previous economic monopoly. Above the altar a pompous gentleman, some venerated general, clad in brocades and with a flowing three-foot beard, is rolling his eyes; in a corner is his fetish, horrific in appearance, draped in a kind of sackcloth, the face smeared, animal-like, with opium juice. At his feet the offerings pile up; the wily Chinese hope that the incineration of this paper money will bring them the blessing of real gold in the lottery. The horse on the left of the entrance (so one of the temple servants tells me) promises material gain: he signifies the never-ending race, all the pace and restless running deployed in the narrow streets and alleys of the surrounding quarter.

The centre of Kuala Lumpur is a pure Chinese town, a Hong Kong in the tropics, with its typical two-storeyed houses painted in elaborate lettering. In the arcade the shops, with living quarters above them, are crammed to the ceilings with bric-à-brac; they combine private dwelling and business premises. Earning money appears to be the be-all and end-all of existence. In the evening, when traffic is barred from Petaling, the main shopping street, and the haggling spills out from these dark holes into innumerable little stands on the street, I don't see a single Malaysian face among the milling throng (at most, perhaps, an Indian woman's sari); it is all pure Chinese, a people to themselves.

BARELY HALF-A-MILE AWAY the brown natives of the country are dreaming away their time in a bazaar, along the river, or against the walls of their picturesque moghul-like *muski*. They do little business and seem to eat no end of heavily-spiced middle-eastern food stuffs. When I invited a modernised young Malay girl, a university graduate, to a Chinese restaurant one day, she refused almost with embarrassment. She was not allowed to eat pig in any form, she said, and then with the Chinese one was never sure of the quality of the fat even with chicken or fish. When we finished up simply, conventionally, in a Malay restaurant she would not smoke a cigarette and her sole sign of progress into modernity was that she considered dancing somewhat less sinful than drinking a glass of beer.

Behind the modern veneer of skyscrapers and chaotic car-dogged traffic this people, or rather the three peoples—50% Malays, 40% Chinese, and the Indian minority—have preserved their archaic instincts astonishingly intact. Moreover they are dynamic instincts which operate in two directions—a combination of cosmopolitan accessibility and fanatical ethnic defensiveness.

IN THE EARLY DAYS immediately after independence in 1957, when, without any particular upheaval, the British colonial rulers had passed the reins to the new "old boys" from Oxbridge, the Malay princes and the Chinese entrepreneurs, cosmopolitan common sense seemed to be the order of the day. Tunku Abdul Rahman used to pat himself on the back, saying: "I am a happy Prime Minister because I govern a happy people. . . ." Suddenly, in May 1969, this British-trained élite suffered an unexpected electoral defeat, and this opened the door to bitter battles between Chinese and Malay nationalists. Since then Malaya—or rather Malaysia, as it has been re-christened since the exclusion of Singapore and the incorporation of Borneo—has never been the same again. Admittedly the setback in the economic boom was only brief, and the mood of alarm following the race riots has given way again to an optimism in many respects similar to that evidenced in the former Prime Minister's rhetorical self-congratulation. But the calm which reigns in the streets of Kuala Lumpur today is belied by the innumerable police-boxes and the permanent presence in the capital of the Malay

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Regiment. Parliament has passed a law about so-called "sensitive issues", and it purely and simply forbids discussion of certain controversial problems. For example: *(1)* The Malay sultans who continue to act as Heads of State in their greater or smaller domains. *(2)* Malay privileges in matters of language, education, and professional appointments. In short, wherever discussion is calculated to raise an emotional head of steam, the safety-valve is screwed down—and no more grumbling, please.

The Malaysian politicians proclaim that all this is done in the name of Social Justice and Peace. The general theme, and I heard it innumerable times, runs thus. The fact that the Chinese dominate business and commerce and occupy the important senior positions even in private offices does not result from lack of intelligence, or from congenital indolence, on the part of the Malays (as most resident Europeans think). It is the result of an unjust historical fate which banished the indigenous sons of the country into the idyllic contemplative poverty of their villages, while the Chinese coolies from the tin mines rose to be small traders in the towns and, by sending their sons to the best schools there, gave them the passport to wealth. This must now be forcibly corrected in, say, somewhat the same way as the educational privileges of the bourgeoisie were abolished in East Germany (there, even if the most intelligent sons of the bourgeoisie are neglected, held back, discriminated against, in order to adjust the class structure, over half the academics are to be drawn from the peasant and working classes).

In Malaysia, however, the criterion is not Class but Race. Half the places in the universities (and the vast majority of overseas scholarships) are now reserved for Malays, and the Chinese student, whose examination marks are better but sees himself placed lower on the list than an inferior local boy, can only grind his teeth in impotent protest. The natives are in the ascendant not only in the Armed forces, the Police and the Administration; foreigners in private business are admonished to keep the "racial composition" of their staff in line with that of the country. The prudent businessman suspects that friendly advice will be followed by coercion and so there is competition for the so-called "*bumiputras*", the "sons of the soil" as the locals call themselves.

"The result was to be expected", a European businessman lamented to me. "Being in short supply, relatively efficient Malays rise like rockets in government service. With us the real work is still done by Chinese and they dislike seeing their brown compatriots sitting at their desks twiddling their thumbs, gossiping, or staring into space. We can't say a word. One can read the riot act to a Chinese, but to do so to a *bumiputra* is practically treason. . . ."

MALAYSIA'S WHOLE RACIAL PROBLEM stems in its way from the "IQ Argument", from the old contentious question of ability and environment. The racists argue that, because the Malays are "romantic idlers", the British tin mines and plantations were forced to import Chinese and Indian coolies. This is nonsense, say the Environmental theorists. The feudal environment, in which any effort led merely to more profitable exploitation, made hard work seem nonsensical to the Malays; if given a real chance to better themselves, the *bumiputras* will prove as intelligent and hard-working as the Chinese.

Musa Hitam, the youth leader and a brilliant up-and-coming man in UMNO, the majority Malay party, put it to me this way: "But it is like a race in which one of the competitors is trailing hopelessly behind. Fairness demands that we impose a handicap on the Chinese who are now in the lead—at least provisionally until the Malays have had a chance to catch up. This means a small temporary injustice for the sake of restructuring society, and this we simply cannot postpone if there is not to be bloodshed again! The more intelligent Chinese realise this. They know that we do not propose to force them to assimilate like the Thais, or to throw them out of their shops like the Burmese, or even to murder them like the Indonesians. . . ."

As instruments of this injustice-for-the-sake-of-justice a whole series of institutions have been created to pave the way for the *bumiputra* from the rice-field and the village into the world of business. PERNAS, for instance, is a kind of government-sponsored Holding Company involved with banks, business undertakings, hotels and "joint ventures" with foreign companies for the purpose of creating jobs for Malaysians. For example, it has totally annexed the "eastern trade" (with the peculiar result that goods from Red China, previously imported by Mao's capitalist fellow-countrymen, have become scarcer). Anyone arriving at the Malayanised Hilton Hotel in Kuala Lumpur would hardly imagine that the reception clerk is actually a younger brother of the sultan. The Bumiputra Bank lends cheap money against Malay-reserved land which the other credit houses do not accept as security. I visited a government-sponsored shipyard far north on the under-developed East coast where the Mohammedan virtues and local crafts flourish. All the workers were Malays from their own training school run by MARA. I spoke to a young electrician. He came from a family of nine; his father had been a tricycle

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coolie who, when there were no taxis, pedalled his customers round the town for a fee of 30 rapps. The young man was full of hope and ambition but his bad teeth made me somewhat sceptical about his future prospects.

"Why don't you go to the dentist"? I asked.

"If I had my teeth taken out, I would go blind", he replied.

Hadji Abu Bakar, on the other hand, made a smarter impression. Starting with a modest capital of a pound or so in 1941, he had built up a construction business with a turn-over in millions. His profits had also increased in recent years thanks to cheap credits from MARA and lucrative government commissions. Small private building projects no longer interest him; these he generously leaves to the Chinese. If one believes the official statements, only 12% of Malay borrowers are in arrears with their repayments. Even if this is deliberate politically-motivated optimism, Malaysia has an annual trade surplus of £88,564,153, her economy is practically free of inflation with a growth rate of 6%; by local standards, the administration is astoundingly free of corruption—so she can afford to be generous.

All this presupposes, however, that the safety-valves on the political pressures hold firm for a while yet, and here is the great question-mark. The new generation, both Malay and Chinese, is less inclined to compromise than their fathers, and it thinks more in terms of class warfare than racial struggle. On the Chinese side the counterpart to Musa Hitam, the militant Malaysian, is Alex Lee, a young lawyer belonging to MCA, the Chinese party allied to UMNO. He is adopting an increasingly bellicose tone in order to bring his intimidated and embittered electors to the post.

Is this militancy meant as seriously as it sounds?

Anyone meeting the two young firebrands is taken aback by the striking similarity between them despite the racial barriers. In my view, both are rather snobbish and "British" rather than oriental; Alex has a German wife and Musa a Peruvian one, both radiating cosmopolitanism. In fact Lee has no intention of accepting the Mohammedan challenge. "The only prospect of success in the struggle for Chinese interests", he declares, using the very latest European terminology, "lies within the system." Quite a few of his compatriots, however, suspect him of being a double-tongued shadow-boxer; their purpose being to smash the alliance between the Malaysian and Chinese plutocrats.

OR IS THERE a real danger of rebellion? During the last year the Communist guerrillas who escaped the British-directed mopping-up operations in the 1950s, and went to ground in the

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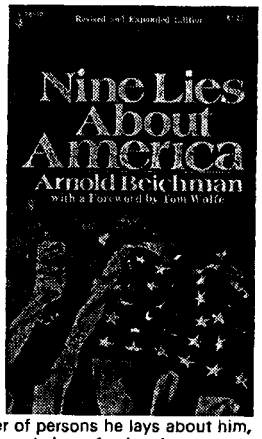
Arnold Beichman



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forests along the Thai border, have become active again. During the anti-guerrilla operations many of these villages were fortified to prevent suspected sympathisers among the Chinese forest-farmers contacting the enemy. The government has now surrounded them once more with barbed wire and they are guarded at night. But the government's search for the threat to its security is misdirected. The discovery of Malays in the ranks of the terrorists is a far more ominous sign than the existence of unrepentant Chinese guerrilla auxiliaries.

The revolt of these Malays proves that nationalist-racial animosities are no longer sufficient to absorb the social malaise of feudal subjects, that even in the case of those who profit thereby, the re-structuring of society is threatening to move from the phase of speechmaking to that of revolution. At the by-election in the northern state of Kedah, for the seat formerly held by the Premier, Tunku Abdul Rahman, the all-powerful Secretary-General of UMNO came within an ace of losing to Citi Nor, an obscure, 26-year-old (and, moreover, non-indigenous) bank employee, who had conducted her campaign on lines of social-revolutionary demagogy. Behind Malaysia's racial conflict looms the historic divergence between the still-ossified Malaysian feudal structure and the far more open society of the Chinese who wish to improve their lot, not by begging from some kind master but by means of their own hard work.

The unnatural shocking paradox that the "industrious citizen" is penalised and rendered impotent by "the idlers" also casts its shadow over foreign policy. It ranges Malaysia alongside those countries, like Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand, which inevitably fear that their frustrated Chinese residents may, one day, form an enthusiastic fifth column under Mao's legitimising flag. Admittedly Chou En-lai has assured them all that Peking is not interested in the fate of the "overseas Chinese" and has advised the latter to integrate loyally into the society of their host countries. But can it be that the tradition of several thousand years may prove to be a bond of greater magic than all the local politicians would have us believe?

Who Remembers '68?

French Universities since the Revolt — By MARGOT LYON

VINCENNES at first sight looked like a mediaeval fairground. The campus was dotted with booths where figures in long cloaks considered the purchase of amulets, Breton pancakes, cotton tunics, incense or, occasionally, books. Inside, the corridor windows were papered with fading pictures of Che Guevara or Mao Tse-tung, or with brand-new exhortations: *No to Student Selection, Yes to Critical Teaching. . . . Learn to Play the Blues Guitar. . . . French Babies or Immigrant Babies, the Same Bottle. . . . Jesus Christ died for your Sins. . . . All for the Victory of the Indochinese People. . . . Stage a Love-In in your Classroom.* The concrete floors, like the grass and the empty ornamental pool, were ankle-deep in leaflets, old beer-bottles, coca-cola cans, plastic spoons, paper coffee-cups.

I recalled that back in the Brasserie Lipp one of France's leading historians had ended a tirade against Edgar Faure's reform law by warning me that Vincennes was "one of its worst monstrosities . . . a garbage can." On the surface he had a point. The contrast with the well-kept lawns of Oxford or Princeton, or even with the public park round the campus, was so striking that one wondered if students were not affected by working in a permanent refuse dump. Even if they had created it themselves.

I knew the learned professor condemned the whole concept of Vincennes, not merely its paper cups. The Minister of Education, Edgar Faure, gave the place almost complete freedom when it was launched as an experimental centre late in 1968, hoping it would lure revolutionary-minded staff and students. A good many of them obligingly enrolled and proceeded to raise Cain for a year or more, safely removed from the centre of Paris. Vincennes became a kind of theatre of the absurd, with endless battles against all in authority; girl warriors sat on rooftops in helmets waving red and black flags, aiming stones from slingshots, tossing oil drums. It was a lovely war, and the fun was only seriously marred once when 200 genuine young communists came to help from working-class Vincennes, looked with disgusted surprise at the goings-on,

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dumped a cache of Molotov cocktails in the pool, and departed.

Since this stormy beginning there have been only sporadic outbursts at Vincennes. And the Centre (officially named Unit No. 8 of the University of Paris since October 1971) has used its academic freedom to the full, experimenting in disciplines that could never have been attempted under the old system, particularly in the arts—the theatre and cinema, for example—but also in new fields such as computer science. Students are also allowed to mix their lines of study, combining, say, Economics with English. Sometimes the mixtures become a little anarchic and just recently Professor Claude Frious, President of Paris VIII–Vincennes, has said that more coherence is highly desirable. But in attempting the American-style "majoring" system, and also in pioneering the practice of grading throughout the year (known as *contrôle continu*) in place of the traditional annual examination, Vincennes was first of all the French universities to break out of the Ministry of Education's administrative straitjacket.

AMONG ITS PRESENT 16,000 students there is a good proportion who hold full-time jobs and attend only in the evenings. Pupils can even be admitted without the baccalaureat, which is usually the indispensable key to open university gates. Understandably, all such students are unwilling to waste time on left-wing or any other politics. Most of the more affluent full-time students are still leftist but have lost their fire and could now be called apathetic radicals, occasionally goaded into action by activists who belong to short-lived Anarchist or Trotskyist groups. The doctrinal hair-splitting grows finer all the time; but essentially the groups seem to hope that creative spontaneity will solve all problems once the sclerotic old system is smashed. Last summer, however, it seemed likely that Vincennes might wither away without being "smashed", simply for lack of cash. It managed to survive, though its government grant lagged far behind its growth in numbers.

Many in France would have rejoiced if the entire Centre had foundered earlier. Academics reared on orthodox lines see the "experiment" as an awful warning of what could happen everywhere if the Faure reforms were ever fully applied. Yet five years ago the National Assembly approved Faure's "orientation law" without a single dissenting vote. No doubt they were traumatised by what are now chastely known as *les événements* of May/June 1968. So they allowed him to aim at two big changes: to give "autonomy" to the universities so that they could have an effective say in choosing their own work programmes, free of the stranglehold of the centralised Paris administration; and to grant "participation" to the students so that for the first time they could have a say in the content of their studies, particularly in their "relevance" to the world and the careers they were likely to face later.

AS SOON AS they had recovered from the shock of "the Events" many Gaullists turned against the new ideas. Already at their Dijon congress of January 1969 Faure's Gaullist opponents complained he was "eroding our very civilisation." The Minister riposted by calling his critics "reactionary fascists" and thereby, no doubt, shortened his term of office. He was replaced after less than a year by Olivier Guichard, who was himself succeeded last August by Joseph Fontanet. Under his prudent successors Faure's scheme has never had a full-scale try-out, and the professorial corps will probably see that it does not get one.

One of its inherent weaknesses is that it is indeed an "orientation law"—a framework that gives only major guidelines and leaves the rest to be filled in according to the teachers' discretion. Faure hoped that most of them, especially the younger ones, would enjoy their new freedom. Some did for a while, but the majority of French who teach in universities (like the rest of their compatriots) are thoroughly accustomed to cut-and-dried sets of regulations that they can obey, oppose, or circumvent. The unfamiliarity of needing their own judgment unnerved many of them. Also the turbulent, sometimes violent, atmosphere that plagued many universities long after the May events did not encourage hopeful experimentation. It bred fear and panic, not stable new growth, and even the best teachers found themselves floundering.

IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS, once a graduate had got through the fearsome *agrégation* or *doctorat d'état*, he could expect to enjoy a prestige-laden sinecure ever after, teaching the stuff he had been taught to a docile, anonymous audience. Even before the shock of 1968 the university world had been horrified by the swarms of new students who emerged from the post-war baby boom and invaded the universities "like barbarian hordes", clamouring for more contact, more guidance, more attention. "*L'étudiant—voilà l'ennemi*" became a rallying-cry among the old guard, for instance among professors who lectured only three hours a week and then disappeared from view, catching the first train back to Paris if they held a chair at a provincial university. When the sinecures turned into servitudes after May 1968, even teachers sympathetic to the students were dismayed. Many of them became outraged by the student wildness of the following year.

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*"Who Killed the Student Revolution?"**

New York City

POLITICAL ACTIVISM *is moribund at colleges and universities in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, and students have taken on the superficial appearance of their self-centred, socially indifferent, All-American campus counterparts of the 1950s. They are cutting their hair, studying harder, shunning esoteric life-styles and their behavior is generally so docile that a few formerly embattled school administrators call it eerie. A few other school officials say this has been going on so long it is just boring.*

After three years of campus calm that followed the uprisings over the Cambodia invasion and the Kent State killings, this postwar spring has settled in with a political sleepy-headedness unequalled since the Eisenhower years. Many students cannot recall when they last heard fiery rhetoric, let alone saw a demonstration.

National issues—as well as most state and local ones—are all but ignored. Even the Watergate scandal hardly raised an eyebrow. And while some questions involving women's rights, local housing and campus safety occasionally cause a stir, the remaining radicals are Pirandello-like characters in search of a cause. This seems all the more dramatic today, the fifth anniversary of the student uprising at Columbia University, where hundreds were injured and arrested in clashes with the police.

Though reasons vary considerably, the vast majority of students now appear to be devoted to themselves—to achieving success, acquiring money and having a good time—all in the most cherished, middle-class Establishment style.

THESE ARE THE MAJOR *conclusions drawn from interviews in recent weeks with hundreds of students, faculty members and school administrators by campus correspondents of* The New York Times.

Most students believe that demonstrations and other forms of protest by students over the Viet Nam war and other issues in the 1960s achieved little or nothing. The idealism of the effort is admired, but the effort itself is thought to have been unrealistic and the issues too abstract.

Students are most concerned about their own pursuits and futures—about their grades, chances of getting into graduate schools and lucrative careers, marriage prospects, personal ambitions, personal friendships and, occasionally, what they consider a realistically solvable problem, such as a rash of thefts in a dormitory.

They also chase the bluebirds of happiness of the 1950s. Liquor, wine and beer are increasingly popular as are on-campus pubs and schmaltzy jukebox dancing. There have even been a few mock-nostalgic formal dances. Marijuana, pill-popping and sex are big party favourites, but opiates have virtually no takers.

Alienation as a general attitude and the generation gap in particular are not in vogue. Many faculty members and school administrators talk of student courtesy, civility and attentiveness; many students praise their teachers, discount the radicals' perception of administrators as reactionary and talk effusively about their parents as understanding and generous. Long hair, scruffy blue jeans and faded shirts—once symbols of defiance—have lost their radical connotations, and barbers and stylish clothiers are making a comeback. Students say there is more freedom and less pressure to conform in matters of personal appearance.

Besides ignoring nearly all political and social issues of public concern, students at many schools have lost interest in what was once a major push to gain a voice in the policies and operations of their schools. Student-government organizations also lack support generally.

Race relations appear to be generally good, but many blacks and Latin students maintain Third World corridors in classrooms and dormitories and a voluntary separatism in social life that may hide tensions to some extent. Much of the white-liberal guilt in campus race relations of the last decade seems to be gone.

THE END OF DIRECT *American involvement in Viet Nam and the end of the military draft are the most obvious and frequently cited reasons for the vanishing stock of political activism. But others cited a disillusionment with radicals and many said they thought the era of demonstrations had accomplished nothing and left the student body-politic benumbed.*

"I thought the persons who organized us were out for peace, love and happiness," said Dorinda Deodata, a Fordham senior. "Then we got to Washington and they started throwing rocks through windows and chanting 'Ho-Ho-Ho-Chi-Minh.' They used us." "The killing of millions and discrimination just does not arouse the feeling that it did five years ago," said Mark Dawson, a student-government leader at Stony Brook. "Things like the Watergate caper don't shock anybody. Nothing shocks anybody any more." "Lobbying is the style for the '70s," said Mitch Medine, the student-government president at Binghamton. "Ten well-informed people making their cases in Congress or in the State Legislature can be more effective than a half-million people in the streets." Outwardly, the broad retreat in the last three years from political activism to personal and parochial concerns appears to be a resurgence of the middle-class values and apathetic innocence of the 1950s.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE *is increasingly amoral as well as apolitical. "There's no longer a romanticism about poverty," said one N.Y.U. student. "For a while it was very fashionable to look poor, especially if you weren't."*

Robert D. McFadden
in THE NEW YORK TIMES

* *See Robert Nisbet, "Who Killed the Student Revolution?",* ENCOUNTER, *February 1970.*

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Some teachers interpreted the orientation law so restrictively that they crushed the life out of it and so perpetuated the old style they were used to. Ironically, they got more support than they expected from students themselves, because many of the latter felt insecure in the state of flux they had caused. At the same time, students who were willing to try out Faure's participation were denounced by the Left, which preached that acceptance of any responsibility would turn students into accomplices of the government. To avoid such disgrace the majority of students refused to use their newly-won rights to elect delegates to university councils. So the ideas of autonomy and participation teetered before they had found their feet, and the general confusion increased. Students of modest social origins who were more interested in diplomas than disintegration began to accuse the teachers and the Ministry of cynically encouraging the shipwreck of the whole system, so as to fish out only the expert swimmers.

In 1969 and early 1970 there were serious outbreaks in many universities in different regions of France. Since then most of the disturbances have been sporadic and minor, and mainly concentrated in the Paris area. They all follow much the same pattern and voice the same grievances. Usually they are touched off by left activists who only total about 5 in every thousand students but can mobilise large numbers by playing on common fears and frustrations. These invariably include dissatisfaction with "capitalist society", but concentrate more on down-to-earth matters such as inadequate facilities, from which almost all students suffer in some way because their numbers have grown faster than the funds the government supplies. Most students are afraid they may not find jobs, especially ones they could enjoy, when they leave.

Above all there is the constant nagging worry that they may join the high proportion who do not stay the course to the end. Only one French student in three finally emerges from the university with a degree; and, understandably, the feeling is growing that this is very wrong. Many drop out "voluntarily" but many others—medical students and future teachers in particular—bitterly resent any deliberate "weeding out", and they are constantly on the look-out for "hidden selection." *Sélection* is the dirtiest current word in the French university world. Students are beginning to claim that just as the baccalaureat gives the right to university entrance and free tuition, once the student is in it is "undemocratic" to let him leave without a degree. A mere 10% of French students come from working-class homes; they and their better-off comrades complain that the poor are most likely to suffer from selection, hidden or otherwise.

IN FACT THE DESTINY of most French children is decided earlier, at the age of 11, when those from the middle classes go on to the *lycée* as a matter of course—while workers' children stay at primary level until they leave school at 16. Their parents still tend to think that the *lycée* is not for the likes of their children. But more of them are now encouraged to try for the *lycées techniques*, the *centres d'enseignement technique*, or the *collèges d'enseignement secondaire* (which are something like comprehensive schools). These can lead to middle-grade technical careers which French society greatly needs, especially since President Pompidou announced that he wanted his country to "double its industrial production within the next ten years." Yet the government drive to train technicians is catching on slowly, though earning prospects are good.

The reason is that public esteem for technical training is low and it is only gradually changing. The entire French educational tradition is against the man in the white overall, especially if he is likely to get his hands dirty now and then. A recent government report regretted that despite attempts to ennoble the technical schools "scorn exists for technical training as against literary, legal or scientific studies. . . ." In short, the technical schools are seen as dumping grounds for pupils who fail to meet the challenge of the traditional bourgeois system. Pascal Lainé (the 1971 Médicis prize-winner), describes brilliantly in his novel *L'Irrévolution* the wariness of both his pupils and his colleagues when he goes to teach in a *lycée technique*. Nobody can quite understand what an authentic bourgeois *agrégé*

"Stay a Kid All Your Life . . ."

Paris

TWO NAMES *dominated "the events of May, '68." They were Charles de Gaulle and Daniel Cohn-Bendit. Both are gone.*

De Gaulle remained in power until a referendum in April, 1969, and died a recluse on Nov. 10, 1970.

M. Cohn-Bendit, the dynamic, spellbinding, 23-year-old who suddenly emerged as a leader of rebellious students at Nanterre University, was exiled to Germany, where his parents were born. He has been little heard from since.

A call was put through to him from Paris recently.

"Danny the Red" has not lost his sarcastic spunk. He refused an interview but confirmed that he was working in a Frankfurt kindergarten.

Teaching? "Oh, no," he said, "I'm not that authoritarian. In a kindergarten you amuse the kids. It's much more fun than being a journalist. You know, you can stay a kid all your life if you want to."

NEW YORK TIMES

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is doing among them. In the end his classes decide he is reluctant to teach them philosophy not because he is appalled at its utter irrelevance to their lives but because he wants to keep the formula to himself.

INEVITABLY, the poorer families who manage to get their children into the universities feel cheated if they do not get the old-style education. It was the middle-class students who rejected their inheritance in 1968. The newcomers are still eager for it, and they don't want it tampered with or devalued. President Pompidou's past success with the French electorate is no doubt partly because he himself has climbed the educational ladder in a way they all respect. It is the Communist students who most fiercely denounce the government's pressures to choose the sciences rather than the arts. They take this line not only because they believe "the university should not service industry", but also because they revere the traditional cultural values.

Yet France now produces more arts graduates than there are jobs for—on average, about 35% of baccalaureat holders enrol for literary studies each year, and no one can stop them because tradition gives them freedom to choose the line of study they prefer. Last October, Education Minister Fontanet suggested that an arts degree

The British Scene: "More & Worse"?

THERE ARE MORE *than 240,000 students at our universities at present. This is nearly twice as many as there were in 1961–62. By 1981 the figure will again have almost doubled.*

In view of recent "happenings," the idea of the university as an academic power-house, whose inmates are in fever-hot pursuit of truth for the sake of truth alone, somehow no longer holds good. It would seem that, if more does not actually mean worse (a highly debatable point requiring first a clear definition of one's values), the steep increase in student numbers has at least brought about a change in the concepts of higher education.

Ten years ago there were 18 universities in England, five in Wales and another five in Scotland. Today there are 30 in England, six in Wales and six in Scotland. To these one has to add 30 polytechnics, all of which also run degree courses.

This increase in institutions has had a decided effect on the percentage of students attending Oxbridge. For example, in 1953, just over 18 per cent of the total of undergraduates attended Oxford and Cambridge, 22·5 per cent went to London and the remaining 59 per cent went to those provincial universities classified as "redbrick."

Today Oxford and Cambridge take only 9·3 per cent, London 14·1 per cent, and 76·6 per cent go to provincial universities.

IF ANYTHING HAS BEEN *learned in the seven centuries since the founding of Oxford University, it is that higher education institutions are no longer for the élite alone, and that they do not mould only doctors of medicine, law and philosophy. Today they churn out a large variety of professionals, most of whom find jobs easily, despite rumours to the contrary.*

The question that must be asked is whether our school-leavers are not being pushed a little too hard into the university situation. Apart from the 13 or so per cent who are dropouts, there is a growing number (though still mercifully an overall minority) which is totally unprepared to cope with a university's work and traditions.

Kenneth Minogue, Reader in Political Science at the London School of Economics, said in a BBC discussion programme that students who shouted down dons were symptomatic of the school-leavers who were being made to jump on to the automatic escalator from A-levels to university.

In the same programme, Prof. Max Beloff, who is to be Principal of the University College of Buckingham (still better known as the Independent University), felt that there should be a pause between school and university. Leavers would be happier, certainly far more prepared, if they could take up studies a little later in life.

LAST WEEK'S DISGRACEFUL *behaviour by a small number of students at Sussex University was yet another example of how a minority spoils the chances of the majority.*

Prof. Samuel Huntington, former consultant to the American State Department on Vietnam, had been invited to speak to a group of students in the Department of English and American studies. Because of what he was supposed *to have said about napalm bombing in Vietnam—reported views which he has since claimed were taken out of context and twisted—he was dubbed a "war criminal" and prevented from speaking.*

What must have come as an even greater shock to the academic world than the refusal of some students to allow free speech was a letter from a don to Dr. Rupert Wilkinson, head of the American Studies Unit, who had invited Prof. Huntington. The letter, from Prof. Roy Edgley, Professor of Philosophy, urged that the invitation be withdrawn, and said:

"I am aware of the considerations about freedom of speech and opinions and the special responsibilities of universities in this area. But there are limits to all liberties, and in my view Huntington has gone well beyond what is tolerable."

To come from the hand of a professor of philosophy, such a statement can only be seen as preposterous.

John Izbicki,
in THE DAILY TELEGRAPH (*London*)

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could lead to jobs in administration, management, finances, public relations, social services, etc. Yet this would require more innovation and flexibility in the arts courses. Faculties of letters were designed to train teachers and even now, the recognised outlet is to teach. Yet a Ministry report warned earlier this year that "the teaching world is oversupplied." A group of bright young Communist students told me this is utter nonsense because "all France is under-educated." The whole level needs pushing up, they said. They may be right, but prospective teachers had better listen to the Ministry just the same because all teachers, from primary schools to professorial status, are paid by the government. In the French educational world, gifts from rich alumni or donations from big business are virtually unknown. Even private Catholic schools depend increasingly on the State. This being so, how can the piper avoid calling the tune?

In any case teaching in the secondary schools is not what it used to be either. The *lycée* teachers are no more certain of their status than their colleagues in the universities. Indeed a recent study of the psychological problems of secondary teachers made by Louis Joxe reported that

> they no longer feel invested with a sort of *a priori* authority, whose legitimacy is assured by the consensus of society. . . . The teacher has to recreate his authority each day afresh in his relations with his pupils, who can be receptive, inattentive, aggressive or admiring by turns. . . .

But the teacher's worst problem was his relation with the administration.

> He feels himself narrowly dominated by an abstract entity, powerful and rigid, which he can only approach with difficulty and whose decisions tend to be arbitrary.

To this many a university lecturer would echo "me too." Despite Edgar Faure's brave plans for autonomy, the central control has not relaxed much of its grip. In any case, too many university councils are dead ducks. Some of them, with 81 members, were absurdly unwieldy from the start; students themselves helped sabotage others because only about 30 per cent of them ever bother to vote. (Most of these, incidentally, are Communists. Without the help of Communist unions such as UNEF-Renouveau, Faure's law would have sunk without trace under the attacks from Left and Right.) So the Ministry keeps control by means of its *lettres circulaires,* which technically are sent to give "guidance" but are rightly recognised as orders.

Some of the top echelons in the Education Ministry have given the go-ahead for enlightened changes; but these can be blocked all too often lower down the hierarchy by bureaucrats who remain invincibly rigid. The increasing drive to break down Napoleon's four categories of study —letters, law, medicine, and science—in favour of mixed educational packages runs into constant trouble because it means unthinkable upheaval inside old filing cabinets. Similarly, this year's enthusiasm for developing *filières nouvelles, i.e.,* specialised courses to prepare for professional life, is also a slow starter because it means creating new categories.

ACCORDING to the sociologist Michel Crozier, France's bureaucratic system puts its dead weight against attempts to reform almost any branch of French society. "We've gone to the very extreme of centralisation", he wrote in *La Société Bloquée* "to the point where we're blocked in a system that defies reform." Sooner or later, something's got to give. But the universities are not likely to be the next flashpoint. Nobody cares about them so intensely any more. Most left-wing teachers are disillusioned by half-achieved progress and have settled for doing their jobs with a minimum of wear-and-tear on their nervous systems. Students are apathetic or worried that they may not get their degree, that it may be devalued, or that their training may be unsaleable. Even the extremists tend to concentrate their interest outside the universities, on the grievances of immigrant workers, the peasant farmers, the badly housed. Other students work off their feelings in their private sub-culture, through comic-strip magazines like *Charlie Hebdo* and *Actuel,* through pop music and a minor amount of pot smoking.

So the picture has lost its drama; but perhaps it is not too gloomy. Many of the teachers who go soldiering on doing unspectacular good work take a reasonably hopeful long-term view. Some of them pointed out to me recently that this year, for example, Paris VII stood out among the innovators by determinedly mixing old disciplines. Orleans is developing into an important centre for students interested in transport and propulsion. Bordeaux's arts faculty has introduced the study of communication techniques. Grenoble attracts future specialists in hydraulics. These are only a few examples that show that gradually, often timidly, the universities are exploiting their new "autonomy." Critics like Maurice Duverger believe that "specialisation" means development along the wrong lines—for everybody should be taught some mathematics, some economics, some knowledge of the great political and social systems. But in some places, this is happening too. Dr Annie Kriegel, a former Communist who now heads a Nanterre department, believes "the whole university system is in pieces. . . ." But, she added, like a jigsaw puzzle the total picture can look bright or dark according to which piece one picks up.

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BOOKS & WRITERS

The Invisible Mayhew

London Secrecies By JONATHAN RABAN

THERE IS SOMETHING very odd about Henry Mayhew. In *London Labour and the London Poor* he gave faces, voices and characters to people who had hitherto only existed as figures of rumour and nightmare. He made the invisible visible, lifted the metropolitan fog to reveal a sector of English society—the men and women who had fallen clean through the industrial system—which his contemporaries had been keeping deliberately dark. But Mayhew himself has disappeared; and his invisibility is not so much the tactful withdrawal of the reporter who leaves his reports to speak for themselves as a case of abduction—he has been spirited away into the same fog which he did so much to clear. Dickens and Mayhew knew each other, probably well; certainly they acted together at least twice in an amateur production of *Every Man In His Humour*, and Mayhew's younger brother Horace wrote for *Household Words*. But nowhere in Dickens's papers is there a mention of Mayhew. Douglas Jerrold, the editor, socialite and man of letters, was Mayhew's father-in-law and he and Mayhew were among the contested founders of *Punch*; there are two biographies of Jerrold, and in both Mayhew is just an occasional name, more shadowy than the servant-girl. He knew George Augustus Sala, but Sala's copious memoirs leave no record of Mayhew. In that chronically gossippy milieu of Victorian literary bohemia, Mayhew, who was as keen a drunken clubman as anyone, is an Enoch Soames in search of a Beerbohm.

He clearly didn't think of himself as anonymous and peripheral. He had his portrait engraved for *London Labour and the London Poor*, and it has a preternatural solidity, all girth, weight, and heavy black cross-hatching. It shows a great, flattened-oval slab of a head—tufty, balding, symmetrical—with the fleshy nose, sunken eyes and querulous mouth of a butler who has been too long at the port. It is a portrait of the author as Victorian busybody. All Mayhew's interviewees insistently call him "Sir"; and here, in waistcoat and wing-collar, is the substantial personage they were addressing. (It was a device with a double point. Mayhew's readers knew his characters only as a lewd-mouthed rabble with no respect for person or station. Mayhew makes his dog-dung collectors and mudlarks exaggeratedly genteel, simultaneously enhancing their status and his own.) Indeed, his anecdotal prose is studiedly stodgy, much given to elaborate circumlocutions and judicial parentheses; as a literary manner it is almost comically self-important. He presents himself as the ambassador of the genteel world, and the "I" of *London Labour* embodies the stuffiness, the pedantic curiosity, the moralism, and the crackpot theorising of the Victorian gentleman at large. It is an artfully stage-managed posture.

For, until 1849 when the cholera epidemic broke loose in Bermondsey and Mayhew contributed his first piece on the wretched of London to the *Morning Chronicle*, Mayhew had kept steadily on the run from gentility. He was 37 when he began the London project; and for nearly twenty years he had lived in the nether world of the Victorian freelance, editing short-lived satirical magazines, writing squibs and articles, dashing off dreadful farces, and collaborating with his brother Augustus on a series of novels. In 1846, he went bankrupt, owing £2000, with an income of around £400. From his own memoirs, quoted—with a parsimonious note on their authorship—in Walter Jerrold's biography of his father Douglas, Mayhew seems to have spent an inordinate amount of time in the Garrick Tavern in Bow Street, where he and his friends got up a drinking club called The Rationalists. Writing afforded a congenially dissipated way of life; it took Mayhew out on to the rim of society, displaced him from the shabby bourgeoisie into which he had been born. But he had neither a subject nor a style of his own. He flirted with fashionable radicalism and educational theory, and attempted—in the novels, the plays and the pieces for *Punch*—to write brittle satiric comedies

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of manners. His one sure quality lay in his position as a professional outsider of society, and he became a railer, sniggering entertainingly at the mannerisms of both the wealthy, from whom he was cut off, and of the poor, whom he was precariously avoiding joining.

The novels he wrote with Augustus are displays of winking ventriloquism. The brothers' great party-piece was female impersonation, and in *The Greatest Plague of Life: Or The Adventures of a Lady in Search of a Good Servant* and *Whom to Marry and How to Get Married: Or The Adventures of a Lady in Search of a Good Husband* they went cackling in drag, doing proficiently vulgar travesties of the Victorian nice young lady. They are sharp on genteel hypocrisy, religiosity and the rapacious greed with which their heroines treat money, but the real energy of the books springs from their naughtiness as they trespass on the secrets of the toilet, and creep, clad in heavy double-entendres, between the sheets of the marital bed.

> Charles and I thought that our happiness was never to end. Scarcely a pleasure but what we could join in it, and enjoy it together. We hunted, and shot, and fished together; and scarcely a sport that he indulged in that I didn't participate in the pleasure with equal joy. . . .

Both novels are crammed with domestic details—prices, materials, bits of kitchenware, meals, lessons in etiquette, brand names, and London topography. They are bewitched, and clearly revolted, by the bric-à-brac of Victorian family life. They burst sporadically into a hopeless ironic savagery at the twittering awfulness of the mistress of the suburban villa, mixing her sentimental whimsies with her contemptuous treatment of her social inferiors in a style of shrill mockery. It is customary to detect at least a hint of serious social concern for the conditions in which servants worked in *The Greatest Plague of Life*, but the Mayhews are much more interested in ridiculing the mistress than in sympathising with the servants; that she flings them one after another into the street is supposed to tell us more about her than about them.

The novels are shot through with an aimless, insouciant talent for observation. They are inexhaustibly curious, and they delight in simple mimicry—getting a voice down on paper, writing exaggeratedly "in character". But they stand in a complacent, cock-a-snook attitude to the society whose manners they catalogue; their satire is without control or direction and they fizzle out in bumptious foolery. Yet, between 1847, when *The Greatest Plague of Life* was published, and 1849, Henry Mayhew was able, somehow, to transform himself from the facetious bohemian outsider of the novels into the solemn, stolid

Charles Gaines
Stay Hungry

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Maurice Wiggin, *Sunday Times*

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enquirer represented in his portrait in *London Labour*.[1]

HIS FIRST *Morning Chronicle* assignment took him, in September 1849, to Jacob's Island, an unsavoury, overcrowded patch of land around St Saviour's Dock below Tower Bridge at the wrong end of Tooley Street, where the cholera epidemic was at its worst. Eleven years before, Dickens had used Jacob's Island as the setting for the death of Sikes in *Oliver Twist*; and in 1850, Charles Kingsley used it for the grotesque climax of *Alton Locke*. The place hardly needed writers to make it a crucial symbol of the state of the Victorian city: it was a line of mean cottages and broken-down warehouses perched over an open sewer. The Thames, still the main artery of London commercial life, pushed sluggishly past it. It was from near here that Gaffer Hexham practised his profession of fishing bodies out of the river; and even now—Jacob Street, Dockhead and Mill Lane stand, although Mr Seifert has posted notices of demolition on the warehouses—it is an eerie, empty, half-ruined quarter, smelling of turmeric and Thames sludge. There are tramp-fires on the floors of deserted buildings, and the dock water is gurgling and opaque. For Dickens, Mayhew and Kingsley, Jacob's Island was natural raw material; they each imprinted on it their vision of the city, and the three passages, so close in subject yet so different in details of execution, are exact measures of their authors' individual styles. Set beside his contemporaries, Mayhew's peculiar qualities of mind become immediately and dramatically apparent. I quote parallel paragraphs from each passage.

> It is a creek or inlet from the Thames, and can always be filled at high water by opening the sluices at the Lead Mills from which it took its old name. At such times, a stranger, looking from one of the wooden bridges thrown across it at Mill Lane, will see the inhabitants of the houses on either side lowering from their back doors and windows, buckets, pails, domestic utensils of all kinds, in which to haul the water up; and when the eye is turned from these operations to the houses themselves, his utmost astonishment will be excited by the scene before him. Crazy wooden galleries common to the backs of half-a-dozen houses, with holes from which to look upon the slime beneath; windows, broken and patched, with poles thrust out, on which to dry the linen that is never there; rooms so small, so filthy, so confined, that the air would seem too tainted even for the dirt and squalor in which they shelter; wooden chambers thrusting themselves out above the mud, and threatening to fall into it—as some have done; dirt-besmeared walls and decaying foundations; every repulsive lineament of poverty, every loathsome indication of filth, rot, and garbage; all these ornament the banks of Folly Ditch. (Dickens, *Oliver Twist*)

> The striking peculiarity of Jacob's Island consisted in the wooden galleries and sleeping rooms at the back of the houses overhanging the turbid flood. These were built upon piles, so that the place had positively the air of a Flemish street, flanking a sewer instead of a canal; while the little rickety bridges that spanned the ditches, and connected court with court, gave it the appearance of the Venice of drains. At some parts of the stream whole rooms had been built out, so that the houses on opposite sides nearly touched one another; and there, with the very stench of death arising through the boards, human beings slept night after night, until the last sleep of all came upon them years before its time. Scarce a house but yellow linen was hanging to dry over its rude balustrade of staves, or else they were run out on a long oar where the sulphur-coloured clothes fluttered flag-fashion over the waters, and you were startled not to see their form and colour reflected in the putrid ditch beneath. (Mayhew, "Pest-Nests")

> The light of the policeman's lantern glared over the ghastly scene—along the double row of miserable house-backs, which lined the sides of the open tidal ditch—over strange rambling jetties, and balconies, and sleeping sheds, which hung on rotting piles over the black waters, with phosphorescent scraps of rotten fish gleaming and twinkling out of the dark hollows, like devilish grave-lights—over bubbles of poisonous gas, and bloated carcases of dogs, and lumps of offal, floating on the stagnant olive-green hell-broth—over the slow sullen rows of oily ripple which were dying away into the darkness far beyond, sending up, as they stirred, hot breaths of miasma—the only sign that a spark of humanity, after years of foul life, had quenched itself at last in that foul death. I almost fancied that I could see the haggard face staring up at me through the slimy water; but no—it was as opaque as stone. (Kingsley, *Alton Locke*)

One needs to add, perhaps, that in Kingsley a man has fallen into the ditch; which may account for the hectic stew of dashes, hyphenations and lurid adjectives. By contrast with both Dickens and Kingsley, Mayhew is oddly detached and leisurely. He is not insensitive to the poverty and suffering of the cholera victims, but, even as he describes their deaths, he can afford to be playful, curious, exact. He notices that some washing is hung out on oars, some on staves; another writer might have been content with the bizarre echo of Venice, but Mayhew carefully qualifies

[1] *London Labour and the London Poor* is published in paperback by Dover Books; and numerous edited selections are available, including Peter Quennell's excellent *Mayhew's London* (Pilot Press, 1949). *The Greatest Plague of Life* is published by Cass in their *Victorian Library* series. Penguin have recently issued *The Unknown Mayhew*, edited by Eileen Yeo and E. P. Thompson: this selection of Mayhew's letters for the *Morning Chronicle*, written in 1849–50, is in effect the sketchwork for *London Labour*. Unfortunately Penguin have shorn their edition of the illustrations which enlivened the original Merlin Press hardback, although the Penguin paperback is priced at £1.00. *London Characters*, not to be confused with Quennell's selection, *Mayhew's London Characters*, remains unreprinted. It deserves a reissue.

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the image by referring to the Flemish street as well; along with the oars, he introduces "flags", and manages to suggest a quaint, picturesque armada. While Kingsley diverts himself in an orgy of theatrical moral feeling, and Dickens cunningly depopulates and recreates the place for his private fictional purposes, Mayhew keeps his eyes open and keeps cool. He is wonderfully faithful to the irreverence and irrelevance of the eye as it enjoys itself when it ought to be shocked and sees things from which it ought to have averted its gaze. This spectator's lack of natural morality—the habitual outsider's essential trick of the mind—paradoxically enables Mayhew to be more, not less morally forceful. Later on, Kingsley observes with horror how the inhabitants of Jacob's Island draw buckets of polluted water from the sewer and make tea with them. He is so shocked that he cannot bear to look further. Mayhew does, and notices that the buckets are left to stand for a day or two on the windowsills, then the fluid is skimmed "from the solid particles of filth and pollution which constitute the sediment." Such details of ordinary, common-sense practicality, like the single red dahlia which Mayhew notices sprouting at the foot of the benighted Providence Buildings, are totally submerged in the writing of conventional moralists. But Mayhew is liberated from a concern with his own finer feelings; he is, among Victorian writers, uniquely unsententious.

HE UNDERSTOOD very well what he was doing and cultivated this innate oddity of vision. In a piece on "Getting Up a Pantomime", he remarks on how the decline of the theatrical spectacular has led to the mass unemployment of "supers":

> There was a goodly show of fine old regulation "supers" at Astley's while "Mazeppa" was being played some time ago; and I confess that the sight of the curious old banner-bearers in that extraordinary drama had more interest for me than the developed charms of the "beauteous Menken".

The dreariest bohemian prides himself on standing outside the conventions of the middle class, but Mayhew was able to translate that commonplace affectation into a deliberate blindness to all conventions. At the theatre, he didn't notice the star; in society at large, he failed to observe any of the rules of the morality of perception. He followed his eye, and it told quite a different story from the one which the educated Victorian was supposed to listen to. Mayhew's imagination was astonishingly and fruitfully uncontrolled: it carelessly and casually broke every law it encountered, and in 1874, explaining why he had attended a public execution, Mayhew was able to boast that he had "been everywhere—seen everything, which maybe a gentleman should not."

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Ungentlemanliness was his style. It started out as naughtiness and thumb-nose satire, and developed into the magnificent disregard for convention which enabled him to write his masterpiece. Yet when he came to portray himself in *London Labour*, it was as *Sir*, Mr Mayhew doubling as Mr Bumble, a travesty-gentleman. The phrasing of the preface is interesting here. Mayhew proposed to investigate London life as if the East End was a jungle of savages and he a venturing anthropologist setting forth with canoe and native guides. The tactic was a subtle one: it enabled him to see the poor not as a class but as a caste. His street folk are outside the class-system, they are not members of the industrial proletariat; their status is determined, as in a real Indian caste, less by their relationships with each other than by their relationships with objects —the things they can touch, or, in the case of London, the things they buy and sell, from fresh eatables down to dog-dung. From anthropology Mayhew borrowed the distinction between "settlers" and "wanderers." Settlers had big heads; wanderers big jawbones. Civilised people (including the industrialised working class) settled, uncivilised people wandered. The street folk of London were uncivilised wanderers with large jawbones. It was an alarmingly plausible statement of the sense of profound difference and alienation which the metropolitan middle class felt when they confronted their impoverished brethren. But Mayhew took pains to underline it even further.

> The nomad is distinguished from the civilised man by his repugnance to regular and continuous labour —by his want of providence in laying up a store for the future—by his inability to perceive consequences ever so slightly removed from immediate apprehension—by his passion for stupefying herbs and roots, and, when possible, for intoxicating fermented liquors—by his extraordinary powers of enduring privation—by his comparative insensibility to pain —by an immoderate love of gaming, frequently risking his own personal liberty upon a single cast—by his love of libidinous dances—by the pleasure he experiences in witnessing the suffering of sentient creatures—by his delight in warfare and all perilous sports—by his desire for vengeance—by the looseness of all his notions as to property—by the absence of chastity among his women, and his disregard of female honour—and lastly, by his vague sense of religion—his rude idea of a Creator, and utter absence of all appreciation of the mercy of the Divine Spirit.

This is Casaubon, or the gentleman in the engraving, speaking; not Mayhew. Yet the impersonation, as shrill in its way as the drag-acts of the novels, is deeply mixed up with what is most serious and necessary in Mayhew's method. Henry Mayhew, ex-bankrupt, lover of fermented liquor, devoutly satiric, anti-clerical, reputedly bad husband, is dressing up in frock coat and gaiters for a dangerous expedition into the territory of the depraved. Disraeli's Two Nations are about to meet between the covers of the book.

YET THE PEOPLE Mayhew finds, or creates (and in *London Labour* it is impossible to draw the line accurately between the two), turn out to be nature's gentlemen. The language they use, as they recite their lives of extreme poverty, illness and degradation, has a consistent poetic dignity. It is, undoubtedly, a literary language; highly-organised, poised, often syntactically elaborate. Mayhew's most fully developed single character, Jack Black the Queen's Ratcatcher, illustrates this with a resonant, labyrinthine story:

> One night in August—the night of a very heavy storm, which, maybe, you may remember, sir—I was sent for by a medical gent as lived opposite the Load of Hay, Hampstead, whose two children had been attacked by rats while they was sleeping in their little cots. I traced the blood, which had left lines from their tails, through the openings in the lath and plaster, which I follered to where my ferruts come out of, and they must have come up from the bottom of the house to the attics. The rats gnawed the hands and feet of the little children. The lady heard them crying, and got out of her bed and called to the servant to know what the child was making such a noise for, when they struck a light, and then they see the rats running away to the holes; their little night-gownds was kivered with blood, as if their throats had been cut. I asked the lady to give me one of the night-gownds to keep as a cur'osity, for I considered it a *phee*nomenon, and she gave it to me, but I never was so vexed in all my life as when I was told the next day that a maid had washed it. I went down the next morning and sterminated them rats. I found they were of the specie of rat which we term the blood-rat, which is a dreadful spiteful feller—a snake-headed rat, and infests the dwellings. There may have been some dozens of 'em altogether, but it's so long ago I a'most forget how many I took in that house. The gent behaved uncommon handsome, and said, "Mr Black, I can never pay you for this"; and ever arterwards, when I used to pass by that there house, the little dears when they see me used to call out to their mamma, "O, here's Mr Ratty, ma!"

It is a condensed, highly-coloured allegory of the English class system, and it has the promiscuously suggestive symbolism of a dream. The stormy night, the violation, the stained night-gown, the "snake-headed" rat, and the saving presence of the proletarian in the Hampstead house, a ratlike creature himself who turns by day into the children's favourite, "Mr Ratty"—these are exactly the same ingredients which we meet with in the most delirious and secret passages of Kingsley's fiction. Sex and class are inextricably mixed up, and the story is full of the illicit excitement of trespass and invasion as a man from one class goes, literally, with all the trappings of a gothic phantasmagoria, to the bed of the

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children of another. Jack Black, of course, was real, and no doubt he did tell Mayhew about a night-call to the house of a Hampstead medical gent; but the actual telling belongs to fiction not sociology. Pulsing just beneath the surface of the language, one can feel Mayhew's own thrill at tasting the forbidden fruit of class-transvestism as he speaks in the voice of the rat-man.

In *London Labour*, Mayhew was able to let loose, at full power, the passion for going about in the clothes of another sex, another class, which he and Augustus had toyed with in the novels. But in the street life of the London poor, he hit on a rich seam of mythic gold—the great underground power source of the Victorian imagination. *London Labour* is Mayhew's *My Secret Life*. It is an infinitely greater book than that shoddy, ponderous sexual fantasy, because Mayhew's private imaginative drive was being constantly held in check by his remorselessly truthful eye. He buttressed himself by statistics (his love of figures verged on the self-parodic, as when he solemnly quantified, in grammes and pounds, the daily input and output of a horse), by prodigious and untiring research, and by a genuine sense of concern and outrage at the living conditions he found himself exposing. Yet the heart of the book is a personal drama. Mayhew was playing out a fantastic, guilt-ridden romance between the gentleman and the proletarian, and he lets us in, as no other Victorian writer dares, on its secrecy, its darkest, most sequestered pleasures.

IT WAS, IN FACT, the secrecy of the city which aroused Mayhew most. He loved what was hidden, the foggy places, the areas into which he could go incognito, in disguise. He grasped the central paradox that a great city is one of the most truly private places on earth, where a single man by playing many parts may become invisible—one moment a gentleman, the next a coster-girl, the next a rat-catcher, the next an unclouded eye floating free over the urban profusion of detail. Looking over London from the gallery around the dome of St Paul's, Mayhew noticed that:

> The haze which hung like a curtain of shadow before and over everything, increased rather than diminished the giant sublimity of the city that lay stretched out beneath. It was utterly unlike London as seen every day below, in all its bricken and hard-featured reality; it was rather the phantasm—the spectral illusion, as it were, of the great metropolis—such as one might see in a dream, with here and there stately churches and palatial hospitals, shimmering like white marble, their windows glittering in the sunshine like plates of burnished gold—while the rest of the scene was all hazy and indefinite. . . . It was impossible to tell where the sky ended and the city began. . . . But as the vast city lay there beneath me, half hid in mist and with only glimpses of its greatness visible, it had a much more sublime and ideal effect from the very inability to grasp the whole of its literal reality.

This intrinsic illegibility and hiddenness of the city acted as a powerful liberating force on Mayhew's imagination. He set out, a professional nomad, to lose himself in the fog. He gave himself over to a sustained, wildly diverse, career of impersonation. Nowhere in his work can one put a finger on a style and say that *that* is Mayhew. Everything, except his extraordinary accuracy of observation which is so devastatingly truthful as to be impersonal, is disguise, imposture, dramatic monologue. He wanted, in a lifetime of what he modestly called "knocking about London", to be *the* man of the city, embodying in one frame all its classes, sexes, contradictions, secrets. No wonder his contemporaries seem to have conspired to exclude him from their memoirs. His whole work and existence mock at the conventions of order, degree and category by which society is customarily kept going. He was a dangerous figure whose Protean character reflected everything that the Victorians most feared in the Protean nature of the industrial megapolis. The bitchy remarks which were made about him by several of his fellows while he was working on *London Labour*—he was accused of indulgent invention and grotesque embroidery, and it was said that he was simply living it up on *Morning Chronicle* money, taking cabs everywhere and eating out lavishly—pinpoint the nagging mistrust which attended his progress through the city. People didn't quite believe in Mayhew. They sensed in him a basic lack of continuity, as if he had carried bad faith to the point of moral principle. So, in a sense, he had. He had been inside the £600-a-year mansion in Hyde Park Gardens, and the sempstress's garret at half-a-crown a week which the mansion concealed, and he could talk in the language of each with equal conviction.

But the passion for crossing class boundaries, for extreme impersonation coloured by guilt and sexual excitement—the side of Mayhew which inspired Gissing and Orwell—fizzled out as Mayhew grew older. He wrote a puzzling, underread, late book called *London Characters*, which was published in 1874. The first part, a facetious charivari, with "thumb-nail sketches" of London legal, theatrical, and social life, can be skipped; and the final chapters are rejigged versions of his early *Morning Chronicle* articles. But three substantial essays, "Outsiders of Society and their Homes in London", "Life in London", and "Housekeeping in Belgravia", form the aborted beginnings of a study of genteel society which might have been comparable in scope and detail to *London Labour*. "Outsiders of Society" is a sad, exact and funny dissection of the personal

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columns of Victorian newspapers, and of the people who masquerade behind such titles as "respectable elderly lady" and "City gentleman of convivial disposition". Mayhew's eye is still sharp and scathing, and he allows himself a style of full-blown satire, a sarcastic orotundity which is new in his work. On the lady housekeepers of Belgravia, he meticulously documents their accounts, tells one exactly how to set about getting a cut-price ostentatious carriage, goes fascinatingly into the details of mistress-servant ritual relationships. The subject should have been perfect for Mayhew, but something is drastically wrong. A quotation from the general introductory section of "Housekeeping in Belgravia" shows the shift in his tone:

> Oh railroads! much have ye to answer for. Twenty years hence we may look in vain for the social, kindly, hospitable country life now only to be met with in remote counties, in Cornwall, in Scotland. Already have you made the "Great Houses" independent of their neighbours. Their fish and their friends come down from town together. And the squire, the small proprietor despairing of husbands for his girls or his rubber for himself, where the doors around are closed nine months in the year, leaves his acres in the care of his bailiff and takes refuge in the nearest watering-place, or yields to his wife's solicitations, and launches also into the cares and troubles of HOUSEKEEPING IN BELGRAVIA. . . .

The trouble is that Mayhew here has no one to impersonate. He aspires to the most dangerous of all satirist's tones, that of patrician irony, the lordly aristocrat condescending to the lesser life beneath him. Accuracy turns into mere knowingness; the alert eye, though it still sees, is bored with the view. Mayhew made a good travesty-gentleman because, in 1851, he had a thoroughgoing contempt for gentility. But the new, quasi-aristocratic Mayhew has a plaintive earnestness; one feels him straining for the right to condescend.

PERHAPS THE EFFORT of holding all of London in his head had told on him; perhaps he was searching for a secure identity—a dignity commensurate with his sense of the importance of what he had already achieved. It is a pity that such an intensely productive bohemianism should have turned so easily—as it turns so often—into snobbery. And there is a deep irony—which Mayhew himself might have appreciated—in the fact that the invisible man, crossing and recrossing the city in borrowed clothes, striving to become the soul of London, should have finally revealed himself as a parvenu.

The Chameleon & the Kilt

The Complexities of Roger Casement—By DAVID RUDKIN

WHEN, IN THE COURSE of researching my recent Casement play, I was at last granted official access to the Public Records Office classified sector, and to the little strongroom where the Casement Diaries are kept (all notes to be taken in pencil only, and a member of the staff to be in the room with me all the time), someone remarked that Mr Brian Inglis had preceded me, researching for his new biography the week before. My reaction was mixed. A full, comprehensive (and untendentious) account of Casement the man, his activities, and the political backgrounds against which he moved, was long overdue. That I welcomed. But there was a twinge of professional jealousy. My play was also (my fault) long overdue; was I now to be pipped to the post? For I had a particular theory about Casement's psychology, a theory I had not seen anywhere else advanced, and I wondered if the old *Two on a Tower* irony was not about to happen again: that all the time I had been nurturing it, my peculiar "insight" had in fact been shared, and this other man was going to publish it ahead of me.

My anxiety, I must confess, increased a little during the months that followed. For my play, though after long gestation swiftly written, was "held over" by the BBC, for obvious external political reasons—plus, I gather, certain less obvious internal reasons of the Corporation's own. Not that it really mattered in the end: if Mr Inglis and I had both hit on the same "truth", well, that "truth" was more important than my discoverer's pride—the full rich meaning of Casement's example in modern schismatic Ireland is what counts. But my meaner professional self was again aroused when, the BBC having at last given me a broadcast date, two weeks ahead of it the first of two Sunday newspaper extracts from the forthcoming Inglis biography appeared. But the sections chosen, to be honest, did not look very impressive: they had a rather bald, *summarising* quality, and seemed to add nothing, by way of insight or fact, to what was already fairly well

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known about the events described. (This impression, I hasten to emphasise, is immediately contradicted by a reading of the book itself.[1] It is, as far as I can judge, likely to remain the definitive Casement biography for a very long time.)

In any case, as far as my precious "insight" was concerned, I need not have worried. The night after my play was broadcast, Mr Inglis was, inevitably enough, heard taking part in a radio discussion of some of the facts and issues about Casement and Ireland raised in it. My "thesis" about Casement's sexuality (of which more below) he described as crazy. Well, put as Mr Inglis on that occasion put it, my suggestion that Casement's nationalism arose *out of* his homosexuality *is* crazy. But that is not really what the play proposed. It seems to me that this misunderstanding arises out of a misunderstanding of the essential, qualitative difference between a Casement dramatised against a background of 1970s Ireland, and a Casement sedulously biographised within a strictly documented context of his contemporaneous own. If I have any right to go into print about Mr Inglis' excellent biography it must surely be because I am uniquely placed to argue the morality of my more schematic, polemical approach, as compared with this particular historian's more orthodox scrupulousness.

What struck me, indeed, as I began to read the book (it is 400 pages long, and deserves to be taken very carefully and slowly), was how similar Mr Inglis' consciousness seemed to mine—that the thorny and bitter story of Casement is one from which an urgent Irish moral must be drawn. He knows he is writing a timely book. He is at pains to avoid writing an explosive one. Yet his historian's approach is informed with a peculiarly Anglo-Irish passion. The Anglo-Irish bed has never really been a quiet one to lie on. Mr Inglis was brought up as a Dublin Protestant. His family and Casement's were acquainted. When World War II broke out

> like most of my Irish friends I joined the British forces as a matter of course, yet remained *sufficiently Irish* [my italics] to realise that if a conflict of loyalties arose—as one nearly did, over rumoured plans for British invasion of Ireland in 1940, to secure the use of her ports—I would take the Irish side.

This loyalty within a loyalty is perfectly natural. It is common anywhere in the world where similar "overlaps" obtain. It is not even altogether a thing of the past in the Republic of Ireland now. It will not endear the author to an absolute separatist; but it is honest. It is also the key to

[1] *Roger Casement*. By BRIAN INGLIS. Hodder & Stoughton, £4.50.

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Mr Inglis' own sense of (conditional) identification with Casement and with the posture Casement eventually took. Mr Inglis well knows that nationality in a people is no simple matter. He knows also that an abused, minority, subject people like the people of Ireland (I do not say "the Irish" for who really *are* the "Irish"?)—such a people will naturally cling to an inflamed mythographical notion of their own nationhood. A people like the people of England, who have always been on top in their own country (and in several others as well), won't really worry if they are told they are an unholy ethnic mixture: their basic national identity has never been in doubt. In Ireland this can never, for centuries yet, be really so. Casement, therefore, of 18th-century Franco-Manx stock, a Dublin-born (Sandycove, in fact, where *Ulysses* begins), Antrim-reared Presbyterian whose Catholic mother secretly baptised him at a very early age, was born into a typical cross-texture of Irish cultural inheritance. He seems, indeed, to personify not only Ireland's inner racial and religious schisms, but also that enduring alchemy by which Ireland absorbs all comers into her own mysterious anima-like self. But Mr Inglis knows that there were other political and cultural factors in Casement's own world that won't fit at all into the simple Ulsterman-turned-Green mythology that modern Ireland might wish to make for him. He knows also that over this hero's head there hangs an uglier question mark than ever hung over Parnell. And so I detect in his book, for all its anxious non-contentiousness, a contained but passionate address to the people of Ireland to draw from the story some timely lessons in the matter of national identity and, less emphasised but there, in Mr Inglis' factual acceptance of the darker side of Casement's life, in the matter of a man's morality.

CASEMENT, AT THE OUTSET, functioned within a context in which most Irishmen experienced no conflict at all between their overlapping British and Irish selves. To serve the Crown was *a priori* to serve Ireland, because Ireland was part of the Crown. There are many ironies in Casement's life, many cruel pre-echoes in his youth of the tragedies of his last dark years; but can there be one that, if an Ibsen had written it in a play, would have seemed more artificial and contrived, "planted" indeed, than the fact that Casement's first major explosion of professional wrath is over the head of a certain "renegade Major MacBride" who in Boer War prison-camps has been trying to "seduce Irish prisoners from their allegiance to their Queen" and to suborn them into being "false to their oaths"? As this, *mutatis mutandis*, is what Casement himself was obstensibly hanged for doing, sixteen years later, any dramatist worth his salt is going to see that here, as it were, stand the twin poles of Casement's political evolution. And in my own play, in fact, I state them as such. Now, a Mr Inglis is entitled to object that this is not historically exact: Casement, he will argue, already had a strong Irish separatist streak in him long before he sent that angry MacBride dispatch. (MacBride, incidentally, was an Antrim Protestant as well—which makes the pre-echo even more extraordinary.) I not only accept that Mr Inglis has got his *facts* right: of course to present Casement as an out-and-out jingo at the play's start is historically imprecise. But even when I wrote that scene, I knew there was already a "separatist in Casement's heart." We have Casement's own words for that. Even if there had not, on that very same page of the play, been a remark about Casement's "consular shell" hiding an inner "rebel seed", even if I had ignored the rebel seed altogether and presented Casement there as an outright jingo with no qualification, there would still be the sense in which that figure were essentially true. For, unlike the subject of a biography, the hero of a play travels across an inner *evolutionary* distance; he cannot always be seen as humping contradictory baggages across the years.

This brings me to what, for all its industriously related relevant detail, was a sense of something missing from the book. I could not put my finger on this till a day or so after I had finished reading it. And I suspect that my nagging dissatisfaction has something to do more with the problem of writing a biography of Casement at all, than with this particular book as such. And I wonder also whether this isn't the dramatist in me asking for something more speculative and intuitive than Mr Inglis feels the concrete evidence entitles him to give. But what I think is missing is a living sense of Casement *the man*. The one essential continuum that Casement personally was seems in these pages as fragmented and elusive as ever. I'm reminded of the image of the chameleon on the kilt. Mr Inglis charts with immense thoroughness his subject's course across the changing sectors of background: Belgian and Portuguese commercial politics, the wiles of the devious King Leopold and Jules Arana, the landed hypocrisy of Tory High Morality (*plus ça change . . .*), the rise of Carsonism, the deep waters closing far above the O'Scrodge's poor head in Wilhelmstrasse Germany. The weave and texture of all this kilt have never been more clearly or solidly presented; but I felt Casement's personal presence dissolving upon it.

TRUE, THE KILT in places has long needed this sharpness of focus. There are notorious episodes

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in Casement's life that can all too easily be presented as ludicrous misjudgments—there was a Quixote in him, and a paranoid. Take, for instance, Casement's endeavours, on the eve of World War I, to manipulate the Hamburg Amerika line into adopting Queenstown (now Cóbh) as a port of transatlantic call. It is easy to see that Casement here is exhibiting symptoms of a Germanophile romanticism of a somewhat *lederhosen* sort, especially in some of the details of the civic reception he hoped to organise for the inauguration of the project. It's also easy to see that he wanted to engineer the cocking of an Irish snook at England. But we owe it to Mr Inglis that this pathetic failure of a scheme is at least placed securely within the context of Casement's own lifelong, almost donnish involvement in the study of Ireland's aborted mercantile past (he had an "insight" or two of his own, into Great Power use and abuse of the sea).

There is another area of the kilt where earlier biographers have not been helpful, and where I myself had taken a misleading superficial view. This is the matter of Casement's attitude to the Ulster Volunteers. I had assumed that Casement dreaded Carsonite secessionism from the start, seeing in it a Tory weapon against Ireland's independence. It indeed became so; but there was a period, I now realise, during which there was a possibility that Carsonism might instead ignite the process of bringing actual Separation about. I need therefore to correct the line in my play that says Casement toured southern Ireland recruiting "Southern Volunteers" as a "counter" to Craig's army in the North. At this stage he wanted the South to follow Ulster's example. Which of course makes complete sense of the otherwise inexplicable "three cheers for Carson!" rally in Cork. (In fairness, it didn't make much sense to the Corkonians either.) It is also in harmony with the abiding message of Casement, on which Mr Inglis and I entirely agree, and to which I return below: that North and South have no real future, until they discover their own shared common Irishness. It makes ironic sense especially now: my suspicion is that a William Craig will do more, in spite of himself, to help bring "unification" about, than a MacStiofain ever might.

Yet I would have liked the picture of the chameleon himself to have been as solid in texture as Mr Inglis makes the kilt. The book would feel fuller and rounder with more of a dimension of Casement the man, and more delving into the substance of what made him personally tick. The innocuous parts of the diaries are rich in Joycean "epiphanies." There's his

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increasing use of Ulster vernacular, gradually shedding the apology of inverted commas; his fond notation of Ulster idiom used by boys he has been with ("Like it rightly"); his (a moving moment) first clumsy attempts at Gaelic calligraphy. In transcribing the diaries, Mr Inglis legitimately makes Casement's spelling and orthography consistent: this deprives us of at least one, I think salient, illumination—

> . . . Egyptian Ibis . . . in full flight over us from his Home in the woods below. (July 2nd 1903).

That capital H in "Home" was one of my "ways into" Casement in writing the play; lapse of the pen or not, it is revealing. I thought it somewhat impersonal of Mr Inglis to have minusculised the H without comment. There also survived into Casement's adult language (typically enough, given his professional environment) some rather schoolboyish terms: an Irish opera, *Eithne*, he describes in a pencilled addition as "rotten"; on another visit to the theatre he sees an "awfully stupid" piece—and "stupid" is elsewhere immaturely used as an incongruous term of disparagement ("stupid dinner", "stupid town"); most regressive of all, for a man of 45, seems "Lunch with the Pogsons, vile grub." Along with this, there went what seems a limited aesthetic universe. Mr Inglis informs us *obiter* that Casement found the *Tales of Hoffmann* Barcarolle "heavenly", and points out that his reading was often confined to what was available in ships' libraries and the like. Yet I find (odd, in an educated Irishman) no allusion anywhere in Casement's writing to suggest he knew the works of Shakespeare. Casement's quotations, indeed, are often drawn from sanctimonious hymnlike verse:

> *His work was done, and like a warrior olden,*
> *The hard fight o'er, he laid his armour down,*
> *And passed all silent through the portal golden*
> *Where glows the victor's crown.*

(Casement's pen slipped here too: he first wrote "*victim's* crown"!) Or, in 1903, ironically prophetic (as much else):

> *This is some vast design, some holy strife*
> *That leads us soon to a larger life.*

Another—minimally significant, but *human*—aspect of Casement that gets no mention is his depression at his dismal gift for games. "Played billiards. Lost." "Tennis—played very badly." "Tennis—played badly." "Billiards very badly." "Billiards with McKay, he beating me badly." "Won one game. . . ." "Tennis—missed winning. . . ." "Still nervous at the service. . . ." All these within one week or so in 1903. His bridge seems little better: "Stupid day. . . . Lost four rubbers." Nor does Mr Inglis draw attention to Casement's characteristic mordant humour: "(Scoundrelly murderer Jimenez) saw us off and waved his cap; pity we cannot wave his head."

THERE ARE ALSO A FEW RIDDLES. Why, for instance, has the 1903 diary a printed 4/- price and a pencilled 3/- one? Presumably it was remaindered, and Casement bought it some way into the year. What makes this natural explanation a trifle uneasy for me is the fact that the first six weeks of this diary are missing. We can see the stubs of written pages. Were the pages themselves those shown to the Press in 1916? And why did Casement keep those newspaper cuttings now folded for ever into the innocuous notepad of 1901? They contain nothing but advertisements: Brown's Bronchial Troches, Jayne's Tonic Vermifuge (a Health Bringer), Evans Vacuum Cap Company St Louis Missouri, "Teach the children: a delicious dentifrice makes the toothbrush lesson easy", "Acquire the Cocoa Habit" and so on. A third thing, that briefly puzzled Rene MacColl but which Mr Inglis doesn't mention, is the extraordinary frequency of Casement's visits to the Earls Court Exhibition (May 14, 16, 17, 18; June 22 on return to London; June 27. Then, after Putamayo expedition, March 31, April 1, April 6; on return from Ireland, May 17, 19, 20, 22, 27, 31; June 24, 27, 28, 30; July 3, 4, 11, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19; August 3). On this, a contentious possibility does suggest itself to me. There are a number of references on these pages to 'Formosan and Japanese wrestlers", and a Japanese name here and there. Did Casement find, somewhere in the Exhibition, an outlet, practical or voyeuristic, for the homosexual in him?

So now we come to the thorn. Mr Inglis devotes a section to a summary of the main arguments as to whether the diaries have been tampered with or not. Until such time as an independent forensic inquiry shall establish the handwriting's genuineness or otherwise, Mr Inglis has (I think rightly) seen that the only argument we have is the internal argument from psychology. This is where, in degree, he and I differ. Mr Inglis concerns himself mainly with countering Professor MacHugh's thesis that private Diarist and public Casement are not consonant. Mr Inglis, arguing that in fact they harmonise, cites Gide and "de Charlus" as parallels. I think the truth is more complex, and that Casement's particular sort of sexuality would exercise a profounder influence on his political and moral development than Mr Inglis would allow. The diary exhibits what a Freudian might call "emancipated anality", something that can, in Freudian

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theory, have quite far-reaching psychological implications.

Our anal pleasure is something from which, for social reasons, we are alienated very early. In most cases, anyway, it is sooner or later superseded by a "genital stage." Male homosexuality can be seen as an arrested development; a passive homosexual, like the Diarist, as one in whom the anal stage has not been passed. Now, one of the principal Freudian criticisms of the Western Ethic is that it is anti-anal: that our forbidden anal pleasure has been instead projected into a monstrous sublimation-complex—a fanatical obsession with tidiness, category, "order"; pathological industriousness and concern with minutiae; and—excretion's more "tasteful" counterpart—the amassing of wealth (as the suggestive phrase has it, "making our pile"). The innocuous parts of Casement's diary exhibit conspicuously anal characteristics. His account-keeping is that, not of a miser (he was never that), but of an obsessive: the 1911 ledger, for instance, has literally every penny accounted for, in running monthly totals. Then there are Casement's obsessional calculations and back-calculations, on long journeys, of distances covered and distances yet to cover, of mileages, speeds and times. (Who else could enter "Left camp at 6.58½"?) His voluminous compilations of report, dispatch and documentation enhance this aspect of his character. His need to categorise drove right down into the mire and substance of his life, giving it at times an appearance of fragmentedness. At critical stages—especially when he is in London, where his several selves seem called upon to function all at once—distinct handwritings erupt for each persona. Hereabouts the diary is a calligraphic mosaic: Foreign Office gentleman and Knight, amateur reformer, nationalist buying only from the Irish Shop—each has his own distinctive hand. The hand that writes "Grenadier. Huge" is a fourth.

BEING HOMOSEXUAL does not necessarily make one a rebel. But if someone has found the self-acceptance, and sufficient opportunity and means, to enjoy his own anus as violently as Casement seems to have done (it is the "splendid", "enormous" or "gorgeous" phallus he lives for, its "deep thrust" and "screw to hilt" in him—though he sometimes paid the price, in anal bleeding and piles), then the unconscious drive to sublimate his anality will lose some of its force. At which point a man's psychic engagement in Western substitutes—punishment, industry, capitalism itself—may well break down. Casement was pathologically industrious, but in the service of the unfortunate. He had no interest in wealth for

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its own sake. As for "punishment", he saw more than enough of that, in Africa and Peru, not to know it for the psycho-sexual delirium it is. It is no diminishment of the utter and noble selflessness of the man to relate it to the fact that he was in absolute sensual harmony with his own backside. This "subversive content" of sodomy is something of which the orthodox are uncomfortably aware. Mr Inglis might have cited Genet, as well as Gide and Proust.

For all this, Casement viewed his homosexuality as an affliction. He felt alienated by it. Then there is the fact that a man of Casement's particular "pathic" fixation will tend to idealise certain classes or races of men as being superior in nature; he may well project upon such manlier or more natural beings a certain political romanticism also. Thus, an erotic element would doubtless inflame his moral rage at what the white man had visited upon the "splendid types" of the Putamayo and the Congo: "Young Cholo with erection about 6″–8″. They are far too good for their fate." I think also it compounded his nagging Ulster sense of not fully belonging among the people of his own land. "Glorious boys of Erin, big and fair" expresses this complexity with less strain and verbiage than any of his "proper" poetry.

There is no tone of reprehension in any of this. This interpretation of Casement led me toward a basic human paradox I feel to be at the core and root of his heroic nature: where Yeats said Love had built his mansion, I think Casement's saintliness built his. Obviously, then, I would "put into" my Casement's mouth certain images and utterances that a strict historian would find anachronistic and puzzling. From these darker waters, Mr Inglis' psychological presentation of Casement the homosexual does inevitably strike me as unsatisfactory and oblique, insufficiently drawn from Casement himself.

I DO, HOWEVER, LEAVE until last that aspect of the book that strikes me as being of the most profound contemporary value. This is Mr Inglis' rightful emphasis on the "Ulster Dimension" within which Casement's evolution as an Irishman took place. It is something not every Englishman can easily grasp, and something too easily forgotten in both sectors of Ireland now—that the Ulster Dissenter had played a significant part in Ireland's cultural renascence, and had been active in her *rebel* history too. As a child, I had it drummed into me how many US Presidents had "come from Ulster" and so on; yet it was left to me to find out much later for myself how many Gaelic Leaguers and Sinn Féiners had been

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Ulster Protestant. Mr Inglis does well to point out that one of the most thriving branches of the early Gaelic League was in black Belfast, and one of its leading lights a local Orangeman. (Come to think of it, my own grandfather, a Slieve Gullion Orangeman of the—very hard—working class, would come back home from beating drums at the mock battle of Scarva every Thirteenth of July, his knuckles dripping blood; yet he used phrases of Gaelic quite naturally to me as a child.) To this extent, my notion of Casement wishing to "counter" the Ulster Volunteers was not entirely, in the long term, mistaken: he did perceive what would follow, if the old Reformationist mirage once more beset the North. Casement's hope, and Mr Inglis' (implied in the very fact of his writing the book), and mine, more schematically embodied in the play, are one and the same: that all people of Ireland can see their way to subsuming their apocalyptic (and provincial) differences in a new, honestly mixed Irishness. To this end, I hope Mr Inglis will not mind if I appropriate one little salient detail from this part of his book that I did not know, and use it in my revision of the play: that the Home Rule meeting at which Casement made his Irish political début had been organised by a Ballymoney *Presbyterian minister*. In the light of recent events, that seems impossible. In the light of earlier pogroms of Ulster Dissenters ordered by an English (half German, really) King, it seems only logical. The ghost of Roger Casement still has work to do. I know from audience research that my play has already opened, in some at least, a surprised new eye. The book, the kilt of it at least, can only do timely human good. I think that is its author's wish.

Lawrence's Aphrodite

The Life of Frieda von Richthofen—By MARGARET DRABBLE

ROBERT LUCAS, in his biography of Frieda Lawrence,[1] says that he finds it curious that there have been no previous works devoted to her, whereas books on her husband, D. H. Lawrence, multiply every year and fill shelves in public libraries. He has set himself to remedy the omission, and has produced a very strange biography. It is interesting, entertaining, gossipy, but it can hardly claim to be about its subject, Frieda. Never, surely, did a biography devote so little space to its main character, and so much to surrounding people and episodes. Some of the digressions are fascinating in themselves—we are told stories about Norman Douglas, about scandals on Capri, about the unfortunate fate of the homosexual Maurice Magnus whom Lawrence is said to have used for a model for Mr May in *The Lost Girl*. Other stories are attached so tenuously to the main plot that one is astonished by the author's temerity in including them: for instance, we are given pages on Byron and Newstead Abbey, simply because Frieda happened to live in the vicinity and must have been interested in her dead and famous neighbour. But the book's chief bias is, inevitably, towards Lawrence himself. So was Frieda's, and she would not have minded the chapters devoted to him in which she features hardly at all. Her role was that of the wife of a famous man, and she seems most of the time to have played it with enthusiasm, though she had her brief aberrations. She might have objected more to some of the clichés with which this book is littered: the style is relentlessly banal, and one gets tired of hearing about "lovely Hampstead homes", "good washerwoman", "father's special pride and joy," etc, etc. Why should the washerwoman in question have been good? She may have been, but certainly Dr Lucas can hardly have been in a position to say so. However, it might be unfair to lay all these infelicities to Dr Lucas's charge, as the book has been translated from the German, and may have suffered on the way.

There are so many surrounding anecdotes, some of which have been told many times before, that it is hard to decide how much this book really adds to our knowledge of Frieda Lawrence. She was an amazing woman, and well worth remembering. Her childhood, as the middle daughter of Baron Friedrich von Richthofen, is well evoked. Her father had won the Iron Cross in the Franco-Prussian war, and had been so badly wounded that he could no longer continue his career as a soldier: instead, he settled down in Metz, as a member of the civil administration. He was weak, generous, and a gambler: apparently he warned his three daughters that they must not marry "a Jew, an Englishman, or a gambler." Of course, all three went off and did precisely what they had been told not to do, and all three

[1] *Frieda Lawrence*. By ROBERT LUCAS. Translated by GEOFFREY SKELTON. Secker & Warburg, £3.75.

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marriages ended badly. Frieda's first marriage was to Ernest Weekley, a thirty-four-year-old inhibited lower middle-class professor of modern languages; at the time when he met Frieda, he had just been offered a post at Nottingham University. (Lucas tells us that Weekley's father was "a poorly paid official whose job it was to distribute alms to the poor of Hampstead", but fifty pages later he is referring to his "lovely Constable house in Hampstead.") The Richthofens appear to have offered curiously little opposition to his courtship of Frieda, and the two married in 1899. Sexually, it would seem to have been a disaster from the first: Frieda spent the wedding night sitting in terror on top of a wardrobe, according to her own account. Socially, it was not much better. Frieda, utterly inept domestically, was incapable of keeping a house or of cooking: she left everything to servants. She can never have been an ideal professor's wife, and at times was desperately bored. She had three children, whom she loved, but she kept them at a nanny's distance, which must have made the eventual parting easier. She also, before she met Lawrence, had two affairs. One was with a local lace-manufacturer, Will Dowson: the second was with a German disciple of Freud, Otto Gross, whom she met in Munich on a visit to her sister. Gross had a profound effect on her, and also, indirectly, on Lawrence: she listened to him and believed in him, was convinced by his theories of sexual emancipation and the healing powers of sex, and although their affair was short-lived, it gave her a new courage. One of the most extraordinary manifestations of her faith in sex occurred many years later, when her daughter Barbara, now a grown woman, fell seriously ill, and seemed to be suffering from a complete nervous breakdown: this was after Lawrence's death, and Frieda persuaded a young Calabrian stonemason, who was currently engaged on preparing a headstone for Lawrence's grave, to spend the night in Barbara's bed.

Her life with Lawrence was marked by a succession of such bizarre half-comic, half-serious incidents. They first met in 1912, at Weekley's instigation, and impressed each other at first sight. Within weeks, Lawrence had followed her to Germany, where he had the humiliation of being mistaken for an English spy. (Later, during the war, he was mistaken for a German one.) He was at this time an extremely bad prospect: penniless, aspiring, almost unpublished, and evidently deeply affected by the fact that she was a Baroness. He wrote to Edward Garnett, "she is the daughter of Baron von Richthofen, of the ancient and famous house of Richthofen—but she's splendid, she is really . . . Oh, but she is the woman of a lifetime." And so she proved to be, but anybody could have been forgiven at this stage for doubting their prospects. Weekley himself was horrified by his wife's desertion, and never forgave her: he refused to see her again, and taught his children to think of her as a wicked woman. She was anguished by the thought of leaving them, an anguish which seems to have got on Lawrence's nerves dreadfully: for a man who believed in blood-consciousness, he proved himself spectacularly unconscious of the blood-ties of others. It is hard to blame her for her desertion: in those days compromise was very difficult, divorce was regarded as a sin, and Weekley may genuinely have believed that contact with her would corrupt the children. She tried to see them again and again when they were small, even going so far as to intercept them in the street on their way home from school, and she proved her good faith by renewing and maintaining friendly contact with all of them, and with her grandchildren, in later years.

LIVING WITH LAWRENCE must have been very difficult. He was restless, tempestuous, unrealistic. He would devise schemes for Utopian communities in Florida, he quarrelled bitterly with his closest friends, he could never settle anywhere. Their years together were years of constant motion, from Hampstead to Cornwall, Italy to Australia, Mexico to France. He was proud, yet he didn't mind writing begging letters, lived off charity quite happily, and equally happily would knife his benefactors in the back. But Frieda herself was also far from perfect. She too was quarrelsome, would break plates over his head, would have affairs behind his back (most strikingly with his blood-brother, Middleton Murry), and couldn't cook or sew. Lawrence used to make her underwear for her: the apostle of sex was also a puritan and wouldn't let her wear *crêpe de chine* knickers. She had to make do with calico. He would cook for her, and in revenge would force her to scrub the floor, just for his amusement. They must have had a very complex, absorbing and mutually satisfactory sexual relationship, with elements of masochism on both sides: he enjoyed making a Baroness scrub his floor, but he also enjoyed knowing that she was a Baroness, and in more ways than one his superior. Physically, she was a completely different type—essentially confident, outgoing, fat. He was spindly, starved, and peaky, and deeply embarrassed about his own body, as his encounters with the army medical authorities show. One cannot imagine Frieda having any inhibitions about stripping off, even in front of a hostile tribunal.

Also, she was good-natured, which he was not.

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He has often been criticised, and rightly, I think, for his lack of humour. Frieda was always able to laugh, even in disaster. She must have had an innate certainty about herself—how otherwise could she ever have recovered, in that repressed age, from her initial sexual shocks? It wasn't theory that saved her, it was her own indestructible self, which used the theories to justify what she knew to be right. After Lawrence's death, far from going to pieces as so many famous widows have done, she immediately (and indeed rather prematurely, before his actual demise) took up with a handsome, practical Italian, whom she carried off to Taos in Mexico, where he built her a house, loved her, looked after her, and finally, in 1950, married her. She had been loyal to Lawrence in her own way while he was alive, she cherished his memory when he was dead, but she didn't see why she should cease to exist. The account of her old age, when Lawrence is inevitably off the scene, is one of the most cheering and interesting parts of this book: Lucas says she "went her own way according to her own laws, radiating warmth and well-being like some pagan goddess of Nature, a mixture of Cybele and Aphrodite Pandemos", and he is doubtless right. She saw more of her children, she saw old friends, she was visited by Lawrence-worshippers, she travelled around. There are two marvellous photographs of her at Taos: in one she stands in a check shirt and a shapeless pinafore, smiling, with the wind blowing through her grey hair, and in the other she sits between her two friends and rivals (both dedicated Lawrence-admirers) Mabel Dodge and Dorothy Brett, wearing a flowery dress, her hair wildly untidy, and a cigarette dangling from her lips. She was a remarkable woman. Lawrence often told her that he wanted to dominate her, that it was man's right to dominate. For her sake as well as his, one can only be glad that she never let him get away with it.

Mechanics of Misery

Poetry Chronicle—By DOUGLAS DUNN

MODERN POETRY has its legendary landmarks, often in the form of brief associations between writers, a time, or a place, a name ending in -ism. Bad poets are easily forgotten, and good ones neglected; but the contact of lesser figures with great names, such as Pound, is grist to the biographer's mill. George Oppen was therefore known until quite recently as the author of *Discrete Series*, published by the Objectivist Press (which he helped to finance) in 1934, prefaced by Pound, associated with Williams and Zukovsky, worth a few lines in *The Pound Era*, and a brief reminiscing paragraph in Williams's *Autobiography*.

Oppen, however, is a substantial poet, though one of few pages, and most of these published since 1962, the date of his second book *The Materials* which picked up a Pulitzer Prize the year after *Of Being Numerous* (1968). For a man born in 1908, he has had a strange, slow career—sparse at the beginning, followed by nothing for almost twenty years, and entering the home-straight with the prolific tally of three volumes in six years, rather like the wallflower who picks up Steve McQueen on the last dance. The Muse knows no sense of time. If Oppen chose not to be in a hurry, it could be read as a sign of generous dedication. That may well be the case; reading his *Collected Poems*,[1] one gets the impression that words are being put on a page because they are meant as something more than flattery to white paper.

Objectivism is, or was, like any other theory of poetry, a mixture of negatives and positives—getting certain things out of a poem, and other things in. Oppen and Williams reacted with disgust at the decorative progress of Imagism into "Amygism". And as a way of writing poems, Objectivism fits nicely into a context of Pound's exported insistences to, among others, Harriet Monroe and William Carlos Williams.

> No words flying off to nothing . . . concentrated attention to what is writing. . . . Objectivity and again objectivity . . . no straddled adjectives, no Tennysonianness of speech. . . . Language is made out of concrete things. . . .

Williams explained the theory in his *Autobiography*. What it reduces itself to is a principle of formal control, and of the expressiveness of form. The poem was to be recognised, "apart from its meaning, to be an object," and Objectivism was to be a way of looking at the poem "with a special eye to its structural aspect."

Anything ending in an ism tends to bore me to the extent that I can feel the blood dry from the

[1] *Collected Poems*. By GEORGE OPPEN. Fulcrum Press, £3.25.

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alcohol stream. Oppen's poems, however, are beautifully compressed and measured. A plain, sleek and original dispensing of ordinary words recreates urban sights, or the nature at the edges of cities, while the quiet forcefulness of his method adapts in his later poems to accommodate statements more than description. His poetic is more extensive in recent books; there is a more generous vocabulary, the poem is allowed more scope, in scale as well as subject matter. A line such as "the queer silence of obedient seas", poetic speculation, would never have been permitted in the old Objectivist days, when such baldly effective summations as this were called for:

Bad times:
The cars pass
By the elevated posts
And the movie sign.
A man sells postcards.

"OBJECTIVITY" is a concept much favoured by Marxist and Existentialist critics. As a state of mind, it is thought by some to be impossible, and it probably is. Belief in its possibility, however, is at least one way of ensuring partial concentration. An offshoot of the theory is that, as Sartre wrote in *What is Literature?*, the words of a poem be considered "as things and not as signs." Oppen's words are allowed that sort of weight, and his achievement is to write a poetry not only of recognisably traditional effects, but with a distinct and original degree of clarity.

His poems are virtually uncomplicated by self, and in a writer involved as Oppen is, or was, in political matters, this is no doubt admirable. One consequence is an impression of humane concern. But the absence of personal crisis in the midst of his social perceptions and observations seems to me a luxury. "There are things we live among", he says, rather portentously, "And to see them is to know ourselves." Oppen's American self-knowledge is a bit less dispiriting in his poems than one thinks ought to be the case, although one also accepts that censorship of self is obligatory in order to encompass more than one other. He writes what might be called a poetry of scrupulous spokesmanship. "We", however, is always taking a chance. "We are!" replaces "I am!" But some*one* is saying "We are!" And in this world, "We"-speakers find nothing easier than to exclude so-and-so and so-and-so. . . . "We" is, if anything, worse than "I". Accepting it as a convention, a linguistic cipher of inclusiveness, allows Oppen to write a broad, generalising poetry, which is, in my view, important. And I wasn't bored at all, not in the slightest.

IF GEORGE OPPEN'S POEMS can be justified by strict thinking about how the writing of a poem should be conducted (by those, that is, who care for such justifications), Norman MacCaig's poems are the consequence of a more homely eloquence.[2] He has been heard to say, "All you can do is sit before the fire and do your best"—the oldest of all poetics—but as it was said in reply to a compliment, it may be defensive. In Scotland, no poet is ever flattered to his face.

MacCaig is an inventive writer, full of the assurance that makes it possible to get away with artificial figures and properties such as sustained metaphors, rapid associations and similes. Many effects of that kind come closer to journalese than parts of a serious contemporary poetic. In his long poem "Inward Bound", full of good writing, lines such as these take the heat off his seriousness:

Swans still go over, seaplaning down
to Dunsappie, and geese
squeezing the bulbs of oldfashioned motor horns
waver high over the Queen's Bath House.

Observations tarted up and enlivened by a mind quick to detect metaphorical possibilities in almost anything are standard writerly tricks. The trouble is that by now we have come to believe that MacCaig is too adept at that sort of effect for his own good, and that he indulges his talent for making unlikely associations too frequently. Similes and metaphors flash all over his poems, and, though often pleasing in themselves, constitute a superfluity the poem must somehow carry in order to get to its destination.

On the other hand, when his powers are under proper control, when his verbalising gifts have been subordinated to the expressive necessities of the poem, he can write with severe ingenuity:

And the window,
that pale psychiatrist, stands watching it all,
and coming to dreadful decisions.

Entire poems, however, are sometimes based on amazing and empty conceits flogged half to death, as in his celebratory poem "Musical Moment in Assynt". MacCaig has written more poems about Ben Suilven than men have climbed it.

Plainer and better poems are "Milne's Bar", "The White Bird" and "Ugly Corner", while in "Behind a Shut Door" he writes with the formal elegance and cunning he exemplified so often in his many earlier books. A more recent aspect of his work has been a degree of unease and fright, self-examination in a humane rather than intellectual situation. Bitterness in "Behind a Shut Door" is expressively and poetically in contrast with the charm of how the poem is written, while in "Country Dance" and "New Tables" he writes a puzzling, tight and intelligent surrealism. Free verse is now one of his basic pro-

[2] *The White Bird.* By NORMAN MACCAIG. Chatto & Windus, £1.75.

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cedures, and, like most poets who have originally leaned back on the skills of rhyming and scanning, he uses the seemingly more relaxed manner with a decent concern for the integrity of individual lines, and the overall control that gives a poem in free verse shape and style. MacCaig is one of the most intelligent and clever poets we have, and *The White Bird* is full of interesting subjects handled with skill, if not always economy.

IT IS WELL KNOWN that Geoffrey Grigson[3] is the fieriest of contemporary *hommes des lettres*, a man who insists on *poems* and who sentences canters to his fool-farm. For all his irascible journalism, and what seems like a century of compiling anthologies, writing books about wildflowers and the countryside, and about art and artists, Grigson is an honest and original poet of many moods, not all of them aggressive.

Grigson is like Agamemnon, "an honest fellow enough and one that loves quails". In "Coincidence in a Summer" he hears the "*wet lips*" of a "rare quail" in a hayfield, raising his eyebrows and writing a learnedly lubricious poem. His "merry sins" are usually joys of the past—it is, significantly, the barren month of November in which he observes a recently stretched condom on barbed wire, his meditation on that little fellow bringing back memories, and followed by the sight of Old Man's Beard, the name of this weed releasing his "appropriate feeling" of bitterness.

Although he is curiously frank on matters of sexual reminiscence and age, his poems are not grudgingly dull of metre, but bright, with a clever use of internal rhymes. His free verse is like Oppen's and MacCaig's in the sense that it has been worked for. Grigson is a lively poet. He would rather be impertinent than regretful, "obscenely bold" than restrained. There is a feeling of release about each poem, of letting go in language. He writes like a man dedicated to not being dull, who detests, but understands, all slowness of blood, who celebrates as well as censures. Therefore he says that Coleridge was wise, because Coleridge said "the happy poem is best". But—and all tradition is behind the qualification—"English poets write of sadness best, or most".

There is, I do regret, our rhyming three
Sad, mad and bad: which do succeed the glad.
But, to be sure, as Raoul Dufy paints,
To write like the bright sap green
Which lights dry saddening banks
Beside charcoal of hard rocks in the spring
(Adding rose madder and a deep sky blue)
For all of us is good; and is for the sadder
Writers, a most enviable thing.

[3] *Sad Grave of an Imperial Mongoose.* By GEOFFREY GRIGSON. Macmillan, £2.50.

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Too true. How many bright sappy poems have lately been offered? None? That must be a comment on something; and the easy answer—"Society"—is not enough. Humour often passes for celebration, but is, in fact, no more than a substitute or a flash in the pan. Sadness is the slow drum struck by most contemporary poets. Many of Grigson's poems are sad, although often assertively so; however, he does seem to possess a clarity of mind and toughness—rather like MacCaig—in which private junk can be seen in true proportion and kept out of poems. In Grigson's case, it is certainly not a matter of restraint as much as true preference.

His literary overview is a bit on the vulgar side. Satirical verses are a kind of writing he does brilliantly, but their harshness is often inexplicable. T. S. Eliot in "White Tom's Position" is treated to a dismissive jingle:

Tom, Tom, the pedant's father,
Master of perhaps and rather.

Join your fingers, cross your knees,
Tell young poets to say please.

There is more to Eliot than Grigson satirises. A more laudable example is "To Professor Donald Davie"—one could have written a good deal more than four tripping lines on *that* subject—while "Tame Life Park" is beautifully savage. Grigson can write satires without first losing the wickedness of his rage in the process of converting bad temper into words. If he took the trouble to write a long satirical poem, he could be Pope's right-hand man in heaven.

Satire is also mixed up with personal reflections in his prose poem "A Dozen Facts of London". Some of this may well be distasteful if Ahasuerus—the Wandering Jew—is who I think it is. He also dissects "the pathos of a literary party." "The elderly," says Grigson, "talk of when they were young, the young are timid. Most in the room do not know each other's identity; or their own." It is his summary of the literary situation.

One can imagine stricter formalists being irritated by Grigson's tune-happy habit of throwing in rhymes and half-rhymes, and bursting out with rhythmical effects, none of these tricks being accommodated to a recognisable absolute prosody. To the downright free-versifier who couldn't define scansion or prosody if you asked him, dandies such as MacCaig, Grigson—and Ted Walker—probably seem writers who rely on methods of sloppy caution, or compromise. Unlike Grigson, Ted Walker limits his rhymes and half-rhymes to the end of lines, thereby calling attention to an effort to be either stylistically distinctive or stubborn. When he writes unrhymed verses, one hardly notices the difference, for his writing is subjected to the same steady precision sans rhymes.

THE MOST ENJOYABLE POEM in Walker's fourth collection, *Gloves to the Hangman*,[4] is a humorous account of a humble lad's appreciation of the languid, leisurely world of Proust.

I'd learned by heart to put grub before ethics,
so that the world of Albertine and Madame Verdurin
unfolding between your punctilious semi-colons
wasn't, so to speak, du côté de chez moi.

It is a very English poem, direct, conversational, catching a serious dose of sad significance towards its end, worrying about the standards of the young along the way. Walker is a poetic dandy of the common English sort, who wears his cleverness with winks and fingers-up signs, often in the mirror. Among the minute audience who read books of poems, he is known as a nature poet, at his happiest in Sussex. "Snow in Southern England" is a good example of this—affectionate, measured, accurate, and a good descriptive disguise for a subject more private and disturbing than the poem is really prepared to admit.

However, Walker's new collection has a distinct continental atmosphere. "Pig Pig" is a long monologue written in Walker's tight little stanzas with rhymes, half-rhymes and rhymes that are authorial wishful thinking. The poem is spoken by the executioner of a pig strung up in mediaeval Falaise for causing the death of a child. With such chilling material inherent in the story, Walker has little difficulty in dramatising it convincingly. There are also a few translations from Laforgue, Quasimodo and Luis de Gongora, and all of them read well.

ODDNESSES OF EXPRESSION abound in Val Warner's *Under the Penthouse*.[5] Syntax is put under strain and punctuation forgotten in an attempt to create either an impression of spontaneity or invigorating rhythmical effects. Sometimes this effort works, but the usual consequence of Miss Warner's daring is to make the reader go back and try again, wondering what went wrong the first time. Apart from occasional squanderings of sense, her writing is fluent, and, as she often writes about Soho, or spinsters, or dire social situations—twittingpans at one end of the scale, down-and-outs at the other—the effect is to enliven her melancholy with a maledictory zest. Many of her poems give the impression of being dismissive, of having been hurt, and of shrugging off what has been detested.

[4] *Gloves to the Hangman*. By TED WALKER. Jonathan Cape, £1.50.
[5] *Under the Penthouse*. By VAL WARNER. Carcanet Press, £1.75, paper 90p.

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Pound characterised Miss Warner's kind of writing as "the delineation of ugliness." Much contemporary poetry is like that; imagination is often attracted to what sense and experience found distasteful or dispiriting. Few modern "achievements" or situations can be endorsed in poems, is the implication of such writing. "Poetry is above that, it can have nothing to do with *this* real world, except to condemn it. We can only praise survivals, or the possibilities of the future. We must be negative; we must point out the ugliness," the poems say. Love is approved, the sanctity of the inner life, the remaining beauties of nature, or the efforts of other artists. And by implying this, it is also implied that any other contemporary poetry is retrospective aestheticism, conservatism, surrender to social and political evils and "complexities", the chancing of commercial arms and the exploitation of an audience demanding "entertainment."

IF POETRY is to be so negative, and if the few subjects which a poem can react to positively and with warmth are to be continually threatened, there does seem very little in the way of a gladdening poetic future. "The happy poem is best"—well, no one, I think, would disagree, least of all Miss Warner, whose poems, for all their nervy and agitated sadness, are reactions *against* misery The word *against* is important. Poems that appear to so many blandly contented readers as glum and unbalanced, are reactions *against* . . . they neither approve nor take perverse satisfaction in disaster, like the man of sorrows, or the character in Ben Jonson's play who had to find "a seat to be melancholy on" before he could write his rotten sonnet. It is a bit more self-sacrificing than that, more courageous and in the best of all causes, more truthful, and poetic. Yet in the prevailing situation of such inevitable melancholy—the word is a convention —there is room for more nightmarish flamboyance, a larger-scale contemporary rhetoric, a new flavour in irony which might deflect from the less attractive aspects of being miserable in public. Val Warner already possesses the germ of such a galvanising pose, detectable, but not extended.

What I have been saying is that a poet must have the courage of his or her "melancholy" and take it to its limits in language. Even dispiriting realisations can be energised into excitement; it is a question of technique, and of the talent that finds words. It is also a case of holding experience at arm's length in order to allow the writer the use of self-conscious skills. Fright, despair, pain, repugnance, distaste, doubt—all breathtakingly from the spiritual dumps, but they become "material", just like words themselves.

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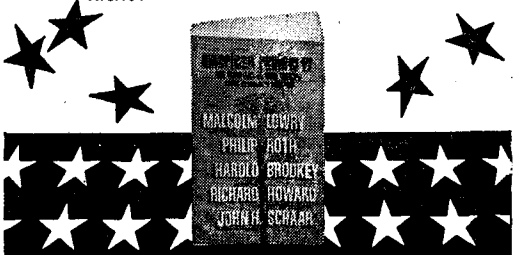

Edited by Theodore Solotaroff
and published by Bantam Books at 75p.

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Harold Rosenberg once wrote that a passage of Valéry's caught, for a moment, "the experience of reality's love for the human creature." Everyone has at some time known this experience, and sensed, intuitively, the impersonal and wordless benevolence of things larger than human life. Conversely, the human creature's love of reality is, simply by being alive, ambivalent, or variable. Grigson expresses wonder at the beauty of natural phenomena; MacCaig intellectualises on these wonders with reconjurations of words, a poetry of artifice; while Oppen refers to "the paradise of the real." A central concern of modern poetry has been, and still is, how to write imaginatively of things which are real and present, recognising what is beautiful and true, as well as delineating interruptive uglinesses and things which are false.

THERE ARE SO MANY ways of doing this—as the poets discussed so far show—that it would be wrong to represent one way as best, although it is always the temptation of any criticism concerned with judgments to do so. Erica Jong demonstrates yet another way. Imaginative pressure in her *Fruits and Vegetables*[6] is relentless. Her book is a celebration of the human creature's love for itself, or for herself, for Miss Jong is a feminist poet, a follower of Sylvia Plath's stylistic and thematic example. She writes of the body and its appetites, the world of flesh, the green world of regeneration, fertilities, possibilities, that which grows. She writes of a real world, but she also writes a poetry of innovation, of attempting to make preferences real, of perfecting the self. She relies on fantasy, on the surrealism of unease—

The man under the bed
The man who has been there for years waiting
The man who waits for my floating bare foot
The man who is silent as dustballs riding the darkness
The man whose breath is the breathing of small white butterflies
The man whose breathing I hear when I pick up the phone
The man in the mirror whose breath blackens silver
The boneman in closets who rattles the mothballs
The man at the end of the end of the line

Like Sylvia Plath (about whom she writes), Jong's writerly passion introduces fluent similes at great speed, less artificial, and less distant from the poem than MacCaig's. Too often similes appear in contemporary poems as obligatory poetic details, evidence of straining after a fetching extension of the imagination into unlikely areas. In Jong's case, talent goes beyond that—

Your bodies slide together
Like wet grass blades,

—a detail caught by the imagination, and thrown off in the act of writing.

At times, she writes propaganda on behalf of the feminist poet, and a concept of feminity is at the centre of her work, as in Plath's, with a similar hysteria, the rhetoric of victims. For example, in "Arse Poetica", she describes the writing of a poem in terms of cooking—"Salt the metaphors. Set them breast up over the vegetables and baste them with the juice in the casserole"—and then in terms of the sexual position most favoured by liberated ladies who know what they want and how to get it.

Part of her intention appears to be the making real of a mystique of gender, adopting notions of Norman O. Brown, Marcuse and such persons. But she is also humorous and impertinent, as, for example, in a poem called "Here Comes (a flip through *Brides*)", where she dismisses commercial sexuality, or the American Way of Marriage:

Good grief—the groom!
Has she (or we)
entirely forgot?
She'll dream him whole.
American type with ushers

halfbacks headaches drawbacks backaches
& borrowed suit
stuffed in a borrowed face
(or was it the reverse?)
Oh well. Here's he:

part coy pajamas,
part mothered underwear
& of course
an enormous prick
full of money.

Although I like her writing, "& of course" does not, to my mind, make a line. Nor for that matter do most of the "lines" in "Here Comes." There ought to be another context for such poems. One thinks of the irreverent satirical review of High-Culture on a night out—something like *The Dog Beneath the Skin*—as a useful setting, and as the

[6] *Fruits and Vegetables.* By ERICA JONG. Secker & Warburg, £2.10, paper £1.10.

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kind of poetic drama which could usefully be reactivated. Many atrabilious poems could be dramatised within such a conception. It would, at least, be one way of making the situation in contemporary poetry more lively.

Poetry of the Committed Individual is an earnest assemblage of poems edited by Jon Silkin, and gathered from his magazine *Stand*. Silkin prefaces the anthology[7] with a long introduction. Eighty-six pages are devoted to British poets, and 102 pages to Americans and other foreigners, a distribution which, in a context of "committed individuals", is probably meant to be significant. Reading the anthology, I was impressed by many of the poems themselves—those, for example, by Tony Harrison and Roy Fisher, or Hikmet, Vallejo, Brecht and Philip Levine. I could see nothing in the anthology considered as a whole which justified the title.

Silkin sees the "committed" poet as one who taxes the reader morally and intellectually. While he would be unlikely to deny the probability that a poet who exerted his effects imaginatively or privately could still be a poet of importance, without any public or social significance, such a poet does appear to lack the strenuousness he prefers. And hence the conspicuous absence of Frenchmen from the large section of translations; commitment to language and thought, to the ideal of a purity that is not a void, is not, apparently, one that Silkin is prepared to take any interest in. His ideas contradict, and may be meant to counteract, one of the important developments in contemporary poetry, that generated by the poems of Lowell, Plath and Berryman, and by Alvarez's criticism—the idea, that is, of personal commitment, of what has been called (with reference to Lowell) "autobiographical myth." John Berryman, however, is included in the selection—one wonders where "commitment" comes in, or if Mr Silkin is at this late stage finding himself prepared to accept "commitment" to Christianity; or if his idea of commitment is so inclusive as to be a quality of passion more or less demanded of any contemporary poem. For one can always be committed to poetry, and a determination that it stand for what is true and beautiful, keeping all options open. Walter Jackson Bate, in his biography of Keats, said that "poetry is always about itself." Visitations of politics, ideas, theories, atrabiliousness, objectivities, realism, high spirits, destructive iconoclasms, self-effacing ironies and insanity—these are not only the feelings of individuals, but of poetry itself.

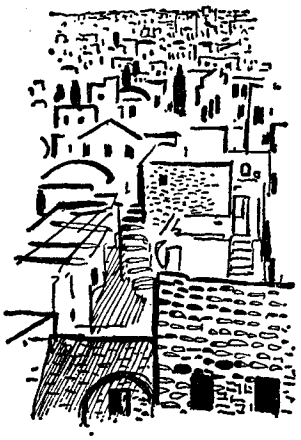
[7] *Poetry of the Committed Individual*. Edited by Jon Silkin. Gollancz, £3.20; Penguin, 35p.

POINTS OF THE COMPASS

Letter from Cairo

Egypt's Embattled Writers

By Desmond Stewart



Since the beginning of this year the generation of Egyptian writers which grew to reputation and influence under Nasser has been locked in struggle with the government which succeeded Nasser. To repeat the proper name twice within the sentence is fitting: Nasser as hero, as peacock, as problem, dominates Egyptian writing, just as his giant shadow protects and exasperates his political successors. For both sides to the struggle the issues are important. Writers whose freedom was curtailed (sometimes with their assent, under Nasser) demand, in the less illusioned mood of today, an end to muzzling, since they no longer accept the judgment of muzzlers. A government faced with all but insurmountable problems wishes to reconcile its own tight discipline with "freedom under law." The struggle is not yet resolved. It may lead both sides to a new, freer plateau; it may bicker in venomous silence to some ultimate explosion.

At the centre of the struggle is a writer, not in his forties like most of the novelists, playwrights and poets, but more than half way between seventy and eighty. Towfik al-Hakim, caricatured with his old man's stick and artist's beret, has been identified as the major inspiration for the young Nasser. His novel, *The Return of the Soul*, (1933), provided in its hero Mohsen an Identikit model for Egypt's would-be saviour. Its argument, that the men whose ancestors built the pyramids

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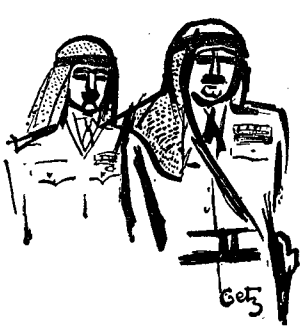
needed a Cheops, or an Idol, was fodder for an incipient autocrat; al-Hakim's other basic idea, that the *fellahin* were more creative than outsiders imagined, inspired the Nasserian self-confidence which in turn inspired others. Al-Hakim, as Nasser's favourite author, suffered less than most from the lack of oxygen in the Egypt which his admirer reconstructed. He was given (the first intellectual to be so honoured) the Grand Cordon of the Nile; a special theatre was established and named after him to stage his hermetic, far from proletarian plays. Yet in a new short work, *The Return of Consciousness* (its title obviously referring to his earlier novel), al-Hakim has composed a bold criticism of his own unwitting part in the growth of an authoritarian atmosphere ruinous to Egypt. The work has not been published in Egypt but its typewritten manuscript has enjoyed wide circulation among students, and widespread approval. Its *ex post facto* standing up to Nasser has been appraised by at least one critic as "undignified" and "opportunistic." A bloodless, unnoticed skirmish between writers and authority may have shown al-Hakim the mood in which he could prepare his rejuvenating combat. The details of the skirmish show aspirations and attitudes common among Egypt's younger writers.

THE CAFE RICHE is Cairo's nearest equivalent to a French literary café. A long, slim bistro of informal tables, an upright bar unchanged since Alamein and a "terrace" formed by the canyon between two high buildings, the Riche is central, being no further from Medan Talaat Harb, Cairo's city centre, than an angry writer could throw his ink-well. It is cheap: a meal with a glass of brandy costs the equivalent of forty English new pence, or just over a dollar. Under the terrace awning Naguib Mahfouz, Egypt's leading novelist, meets friends and disciples on Friday evenings. A poet from Jordan seeking out a short-story writer from Tunis would first look here.

On the morning of 10 July 1972, the authorities made it known that they would allow no public protest at the murder in Beirut of Ghassan Kanafani and his young niece, who were blown up as Kanafani, editor of the weekly newspaper belonging to the *Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine*, turned the ignition switch of his car. The Egyptian government had never shown enthusiasm for the left-militant policies of the Front, and after Front members blew up a jumbo jet at Cairo airport in 1970, lack of enthusiasm turned to hostility. The Riche now became the rallying point for those who had decided to disobey the government's prohibition. Most Egyptian writers, whatever their politics, mourned for Kanafani as the author of three outstanding novels. Yusif Idris, the middle-aged physician whose sensitive realism has transformed the Arab short story, immediately told friends that if necessary he would walk through central Cairo alone, placarding his protest at this killing of a confrère.



> "It is not that I do, or do not, support Kanafani's ideas. It is because if one writer is attacked, we all are. Those who want to dominate Egypt and the Arabs must first silence our writers and intellectuals. The killing of Kanafani is a warning to us all. . . ."

The attitude of Yusif Idris and the quick response to it showed both the deep distrust of authority common to Arab writers and a new sense of freedom in Sadat's Cairo. For Idris was not to protest alone. Late that afternoon, as two members of the ancient régime sipped coffee indoors, the terrace slowly filled with representatives of the younger generation of writers, journalists and broadcasters. A group of artists hastily prepared placards inside, their Arabic calligraphy denouncing this murder of a Palestinian writer; the completing of their task allowed the start of the protest to be delayed by half an hour, during which stragglers might swell the protesting numbers. In the event, about forty men and women formed up outside the Café. The placards were divided among the younger participants. The marchers then moved past the statue of Talaat Harb (the "national capitalist" who founded Bank Masr), up Kasr el-Nil with its milliners and bookshops, round the hortatory statue of Mustafa Kamil and alongside the site of Khedive Ismail's Opera (since its burning a car park) to wheel west down once fashionable Fuad Street (renamed "26 July" after the abdication day of Fuad's son, Farouk) towards the Journalists' Syndicate near the Belgian Embassy.

The two significant things about the protest march were that it took place and that it aroused little reaction. Few pedestrians can have sensed the courage needed, after two decades of directed emotion, for unarmed men and women to choose their cause and then support it before the eyes and cameras of authority. "Who was Kanafani?"

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I heard pedestrians ask. (In Cairo, al-Fatah and Yasser Arafat are the reported, hence respected, guerrillas.) Courteous police cars escorted the procession with an aplomb that would have graced a CND march in London W.1. Outside the Banque d'Alexandrie a young man in plain clothes took pictures of the marchers. "For police records", I heard observers cynically explaining, though he might just as well have represented a Lebanese weekly.

In fact, the march had no consequences for anyone: political passions sag in July. But, falling neatly between student troubles in January and a further uproar in December, it reflected a society only superficially tolerant of dissent; more deeply, it predicted the new sharpening of conflict in December.

THE JANUARY DEMONSTRATIONS at Cairo's two major secular universities, Giza and Ain Shems, were an explosion of juvenescence in the wake of Sadat's failure to turn 1971 into his "Year of Decision." Encouraged by the President's insistence on freedom under the rule of law, but exasperated by the state of "no war and no peace" which clouded their future, they plastered the walls of their colleges with hand-written newspapers which made the grey Egyptian press seem the muted thing it was. Auditoriums crammed with lean, excited students thundered applause as heady resolutions rasped through microphones. "Student democracy" made the organs of state—the Arab Socialist Union, the National Assembly—seem obsequious and dull. The only violence—when police spies, normal in Nasser's Egypt as canna lilies in public gardens, were hustled from lecture halls before they could take down names—was the kind of violence which many Egyptians now approved.

The January eruptions were benign compared with those in more experienced capitals. But for a régime which had had as little experience of criticism as of Kabuki theatre, the student unrest posed an unnerving challenge. In January it had been defused by the timely start of the mid-year holiday; in December it was not only more *rusé* and determined in itself; it was supplemented by the writers and intellectuals it had inspired.

In Sadat's response to the growing challenge his emotional and intellectual formation played a decisive role. In 1938, when he had begun his own revolutionary career, writers played no inspiriting role. Apart from a coterie headed by Taha Hussein and Towfik al-Hakim (who were far from tackling the problems of the masses) the men writing in the Egyptian press were venal and unimpressive. The journalists whom Sadat had then admired (as he was to confirm at a later stage of the conflict) were Ibrahim al-Masri and Amir Boktor. The former is still active in 1973, editing a "Puzzled Hearts" column in a popular weekly; Boktor, now dead, purveyed psychological simplicities akin to those versified in England by Patience Strong. In the twilight of war Sadat and Nasser saw themselves as lonely champions of an Egypt which was fought over without either her participation or consent. Sadat's wartime dalliance with the Axis has been recounted in his *Revolt on the Nile*, an unghosted work published before reticence was imposed on the youthful officers who mastered Egypt in 1952. The Nazi race doctrines meant nothing, and could mean nothing, to an Egyptian. But the cult of swift action, the use of mass media to unite a nation in obedience to "a just despot" (another phrase found in the writings of al-Hakim) appealed to many in a frustrated generation. The only intellectual movement with which Sadat had affinities as well as contacts was the Muslim Brotherhood, whose popularity and sincerity were shadowed by an acceptance of violence as a political means. Yet Sadat's experience under Nasser was to construct, bit by bit, an antithesis to his youthful outlook.

More than most he savoured the price of "autocratic salvation." He was the broadcaster of the revolutionary communiqué on the morning of 23 July 1952, and could claim to be the energiser of the *coup d'état*. Unlike the more cautious Nasser he had been expelled from the army and, when not in prison, had experienced a poverty unknown to his comrades in the junta. But Nasser soon pushed Sadat into relative obscurity. Positions in the Afro-Asian movement, the press and various one-party institutions rewarded him for neither defying Nasser in the manner of Neguib nor incurring his displeasure in the manner of Abdul Latif al-Boghdadi or Kemaleddin Hussein. On one occasion he struck a small but significant blow for greater freedom. After the Syrian secession of 1961 a wounded Nasser convoked a Congress of Popular Powers to create an organisation which could defend his régime. Sadat was chosen as Speaker. After suffocating hours of talk, a professor from the religious university of al-Azhar, Khaled Muhammad Khaled, suddenly electrified the yawners. If in 1952 Nasser had rightly advocated the reform, but not the abolition, of the Egyptian army, why should the same argument not be applied to Egyptian democracy? This defence of the defunct parliamentary system had unusual undertones: for while Leftists sometimes defended gaoled comrades or Muslims pleaded for gaoled Brothers, this was the first time that someone had argued for the free expression of

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all unacceptable opinions. Khaled's argument roused shrieks of protest from listening sycophants: Sadat showed courage in insisting that he be allowed to speak. This gesture achieved little. Nasser closed the debate by proclaiming that only those who benefited from the revolution should be represented in the political organisation, which turned out to be the Arab Socialist Union. But the chief beneficiaries of the revolution turned out to be officers. Insidiously—Nasser's confidant, Muhammad Hassanain Haikal, later described it in *al-Ahram* as a silent coup—the army under Field-Marshal Amer became a sultanate within a sultanate, beyond criticism or investigation, but not, as events were to show, beyond defeat.

SADAT'S SUCCESSION to Nasser in 1970 forced him to yoke two conflicting elements in himself: a recognition that the sultanate had proved disastrous to Egypt, and an adaptation to the sultanate which went deeper than the critical mind. The first recognition was widespread in Egypt, though it varied in depth. A comedy—an adaptation of the Oedipus legend to the Egyptian situation—had achieved widespread popularity even in Nasser's last phase. Ali Salim's *You Who Killed The Beast* first blamed the ruin of Egyptian Thebes on the activities of the police chief and then implied that in killing the sphinx Oedipus had usurped a role which should belong to every single citizen. The play was performed successfully all over the Arab world, showing that it had wider than Egyptian implications. But Sadat and his contemporaries had spent sixteen years in a windowless interrogation chamber wherein the questions, asked by one man, were answered with a polite *Effendim* (Yes, Sir!) by everyone else. After such conditioned air the breezes of the ordinary world might well seem dangers to a ruler, to a writer, intoxicants. Egypt's journalists made growing use of the new freedom in Sadat's first phase.

UNDER NASSER, the Arab Socialist Union, which owned the press, had been neither a political party with an ideology nor a democratic forum representing organised political forces. Instead, Nasser had institutionalised his own leadership. With supreme skill he balanced one extreme against another, now favouring Ali Sabri on the left, now Zakaria Muhyeddin on the right. After Nasser's death, disparate individuals began huddling, for self-protection, in what could have been the forerunners of at least a right-wing and a left-wing party.

Journalists personified these tendencies. Cairo's three daily papers developed recognisable personalities. *Al-Akhbar* under Moussa Sabri spoke for the Islamic right. *Al-Gumhuriya* (Sadat's former newspaper) expressed the ideas associated with Ali Sabri and the left; its editor was the novelist Fathi Ghanem. *Al-Ahram* under Haikal represented an ambiguous middle. Instead of allowing these tendencies towards democratic contest to develop, Sadat in the early summer of 1971 was either genuinely afraid of a left-wing coup against himself or could not envisage controlling a factional state much longer. Outvoted by the partisans of Ali Sabri over union with Libya (the Egyptian left deplored the fundamentalism of Muamar al-Qadafi), Sadat announced, then smashed, a conspiracy. Fathi Ghanem was dismissed from his editorship, but subjected to neither harassment nor pay-cuts. Sent home on full salary, he started work on a new novel which was soon serialised in the weekly *Sabah al-Khair*.

Sadat's most telling gesture during the crisis had been his public burning of the tapes which recorded the conversations of thousands of watched Egyptians. The association of his defeated opponents with the apparatus of a police state made them unappealing martyrs.

But the hectic expulsion of the Russian experts in the summer of 1972, a sense of indirection on the urgent question of peace or war, ensured that new student demonstrations in the early winter were accompanied by explicit demands for the legitimisation of student protest and the abolition of a censorship whose severities could only be justified by a shooting war. In the one article published by *al-Ahram* on press freedom, an editor (Makram Muhammad Akram) quoted the poet Ahmed Hegazy for the argument that the censor, far from confining himself to questions of security, regularly deleted adverse criticisms of a certain TV director's work. In the second half of December the General Assembly of the Journalist's Syndicate voted to go into permanent session until its demand for the lifting of non-military censorship was answered by the Assembly and the Arab Socialist Union.

On Thursday, 28 December, at the start of the Egyptian weekend, Sadat delivered a fateful speech. A denunciation of "opportunist Leftists and reactionary Rightists" was coupled with the

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argument that while freedom of thought existed and should exist, freedom of expression had social implications and in time of war had to be limited. The next day the journalists assembled for the last time. That night a wave of arrests filled the gaols with students.

THIS WAS THE MOMENT for a prudent man of over seventy-five to hold his tongue. Instead, Towfik al-Hakim seized on the moment to issue a *Declaration from the Writers and Men of Letters* which he had drafted himself. Signed by some forty-six names and dated 8 January 1973, it seems assured of a place in the museum of Egyptian democracy, if such an edifice is ever built. Al-Hakim had composed it with a scribe's care, hoping, as he says, that the government could even publish it, and get credit for so doing. After stressing their confidence in the wisdom of the President, the signatories dealt with two matters of basic importance, student unrest and the need for freedom, not only in the press but in the institutions of the state. The turmoil in the university was ascribed to the collective anxiety of a young generation confronted with an apparently limitless period in the army. But this malaise also represented an objective problem for Egypt, since the skills so laboriously acquired by the young and so needful for the country were doomed to rust. Politically, the Declaration demanded that the government should submit a greater part of its authority to the people. Free discussion of national issues in the press and in existing political institutions would ensure that government policy should have some connection with public opinion.

Since Towfik al-Hakim occupied an office suite at *al-Ahram* (to which he had been a regular contributor), it was easy to have copies of the Declaration reproduced, and sent first to Sadat, and then to the Arab Socialist Union committee appointed to investigate the student unrest. Further copies were sent to other possible signatories. Not all the writers approached agreed to sign. Abdul Rahman Sharkawy, for one, author of the best novel written about rural Egypt, thought the Declaration likely to provoke more harm than good. Some writers were not approached. But because many copies had been reproduced some inevitably left the country. That the text was published in the Lebanese and Kuwaiti press before he could reply was to anger Sadat.

THEORETICALLY, every journalist in Egypt belonged to the Arab Socialist Union, though some, like Louis Awad, respected critic and for some years literary editor of *al-Ahram*, had never consciously joined. Also in theory, no Egyptian could contribute to the press, which was owned by the Arab Socialist Union, unless he were persona grata with the Union. A disciplinary committee of the Arab Socialist Union was now formed, under the nominal guidance of Hafiz Bedawy (a former primary school-teacher and country lawyer who had risen from obscurity under Nasser to become the Speaker of the National Assembly under Sadat). Its terms of reference: what to do about the Egyptian writers and their request? The committee had five members: Hamed Mahmoud, lawyer, substantial landowner and secretary to a Kuwaiti prince resident in Cairo; Yusif Makadi, a former army officer; Ahmed Kemal Magd, a former Muslim Brother and now Minister of Youth; Fakhry Abdul Nabi, former governor of Qena and now Minister of Justice; and the most influential, Muhammad Osman Ismail. The clear dominance of Muhammad Osman gave some credibility to the analysis (despite its usual jargon) of a well-known Cairo Marxist. The committee represented an aggressive new kulak class. This class represented the substantial landlords whose holdings of between twenty-five and fifty acres had not been challenged by Nasser's land reform, which, while breaking the power of the old Turko-Circassian feudalists had given rural authority to Egyptian replacements.

Muhammad Osman had recently argued in the Arab Socialist Union that Egypt's prime need was an ideology. Eighty per cent of Egyptians, he asserted, had no ideology, while the remaining twenty per cent were divided between Leftists and Rightists. Egypt should create a new patriotic ideology—and then imitate Hitler and Stalin and shoot those who opposed it.

This disciplinary committee decided in principle to launch a campaign against the dissident writers. (Muhammad Osman was later to assert that the decision was purely "theoretical" and that the lists of writers to be dealt with came from elsewhere.) The campaign began on 4 February and used a sequence of four measures against, eventually, some hundred writers and journalists.

First, in two succesive proscriptions, a large group was formally expelled from the Arab Socialist Union. This effectively closed the entire Egyptian press to their writings, past or present, controversial or anodyne. The unfavourable publicity given to the proscriptions—and the reported opposition to them of the then Prime Minister, Aziz Sidki, and the Secretary-General of the Arab Socialist Union, Sayid Marei—suggested the second measure. Since the press came under the same authority as the state Ministry of Information, in early March, without

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publicity, a larger number of journalists were transferred from their newspapers to sinecures at the Ministry. They were not expected to work, only to draw their full salaries at the end of the month. They could not, however, contribute free-lance work to the press, or participate in broadcasting or television.

A third measure was reserved for Towfik al-Hakim himself and the novelist Naguib Mahfouz. Too distinguished to be banned or transferred, they were placed under an interdict of silence. Their works were not to be published, performed, criticised or mentioned in any of the media. In a fourth measure, a number of journalists received letters asking them to stay at home until further notice.

These measures were of broader scope than any repressive acts against intellectuals undertaken by Nasser: but they were applied with less harshness and less selectivity. Under Nasser, Sharkawy, then considered a communist, had been "sent home" for five years, the last two with no salary whatsoever. To support his family he was forced to borrow from relations and friends. A few writers were imprisoned. It was all intended to encourage their colleagues to be quiescent.

The Committee's decision to enforce its own broad measures prompts three pertinent questions. How have they affected the writers involved? what criteria were used in selecting the writers to be punished? and what was the intention behind the strategy?

FEW EGYPTIAN WRITERS live entirely by the composition of articles or the receipt of royalties from their books. Nearly all have benefited from the system developed under Nasser whereby writers are attached, as salaried officials, to the newspapers, publishing houses, and broadcasting services which, directly or indirectly, come under the state. Thus the most critical problem posed by the proscriptions was financial. Its solution at first depended on the editors, who reacted in different ways. Muhammad Hassanain Haikal at *al-Ahram* insisted that the dismissed writers still had the right to use their offices and to draw full salaries, even if they could not publish. Moussa Sabri at *al-Akhbar* took a harsher stand. Posting policemen at the door with orders to prevent banned writers from retrieving what was in their desks, he announced that he would pay half-salaries to those who had qualified for a pension by working for fifteen years, but nothing to younger writers who had not. In early April Sadat himself intervened and said that all those who were banned should receive full salaries while their cases were pending.

Psychologically, the proscriptions, like most human experiences, have had their positive as well as their negative side. To be considered dangerous—to be taken seriously—can be a species of compliment. Thus complimented, a journalist whose comments had become tired and routine would sharpen his pencil at home and start on a novel. But the negative results were more relevant. Since all the major publishing houses in Egypt are government-owned, no novel or book of essays was likely to be published while the ban endured. No book burnings followed the burnings of the secret tapes. Works by banned authors are not hard to find in Cairo's many bookshops. The authors worst hit are those who work for the theatre, and the actors who are involved in their plight. Since all the theatres and television programmes come under the state, to write a play, which more than a novel depends on other people for its production as well as its vitality, becomes an uphill task for a forbidden playwright.

By April Fool's Day around ninety writers and journalists had come under ban, had been transferred or silenced. No official criterion was named; no criterion could be inferred from the names of those involved. There are men on the Left: Lutfi al-Khouli, editor of a Marxist monthly sponsored by *al-Ahram*; Louis Awad, whose reputation is Mediterranean, not only Egyptian; and Ibrahim Mansur whose lively magazine *1968* spoke for a maverick Left open to new ideas. There are men on the Right such as Sarwat Abbaza (a personal friend of Dr Hatem, the deputy prime minister responsible for the media) and Muhammad Salmawy. The latter, one of the young academics recruited for *al-Ahram* by Haikal, was in New York in 1971 and secured the first interview given to any journalist by the new Secretary-General of the UN.

Not all those who signed the journalists' petition or the writers' Declaration have been banned. Egypt's two most prominent poets, Salah Abdul Sabbour and Ahmed Hegazy, both signed: but only the second has been banned, thereby losing his position as literary editor of *Rose el-Yussef*. Banning is the fate of Mohammad Auda, a political commentator known for his sympathy for the Soviet Union. Transfer has given new leisure not only to Ahmed Bahaeddin (criticised by the militants for choosing his words with "too much moderation") but also to Makram Muhammad Ahmed (known for his adherence to Islamic tradition). The measures have anaesthetised a theatre whose vitality was attracting world attention only two years ago and which owed much of its impetus to Dr Hatem's first tenure of office under Nasser, when he proved a Maecenas to theatre-builders. Alfred Farag, a brilliant prose playwright, and Ali al-Ra'i, an

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inspired director, have both been proscribed. The cinema has suffered no less. Yusif Chahine's production of Lutfi al-Khouli's *The Sparrow*, a story of a working-class family's reaction to the Six Days War, was not shown in Egypt—but was presented as the Algerian contribution to the Cannes Festival, some of its scenes having been shot in Algiers. Ali Salim (who has not been banned) wrote a short story, *Song in the Pass*, as a tribute to his brother who was killed in 1967. A moving and unrhetorical film about a group of six soldiers isolated in one of the Sinai passes was based on this story by a twenty-five-year-old director, Ali Abdul Khalek. Because he and a talented comic actor, Salah Saadani, accepted an invitation from the students to discuss the implications of this film, each is now unemployed.

AS TO THE STRATEGY behind the measures, only time or some sudden indiscretion will show which of the following guesses comes nearest to the truth. I found all five to be current in Cairo.

1. Egypt is a ship in the midst of a tempest. "A Captain cannot tolerate advice from passengers; too lively comment in the press could exacerbate the steerage, or upset the steersman. . . ." Advocates of this view cite the Britain of 1940, when Sir Oswald Mosley was gaoled without trial. (But for London to have set Cairo a genuine precedent, one would have to imagine a situation in which a parliamentary committee, while allowing Godfrey Winn, Noël Coward and John Gordon, had banned the publication of further works by Stephen Spender, Elizabeth Bowen, Graham Greene and George Orwell, had transferred Dylan Thomas and Tom Driberg to some non-functioning Whitehall Ministry and forbidden mention in reviews of Charles Morgan and Evelyn Waugh.

2. The measures are a response to an American refusal to put pressure on Israel until an Arab world as disciplined as Greece—or South Viet Nam—is in a position to accept a peaceful solution. A more sophisticated version of this theory argues that this is not so much what America wants as what naïve pro-Americans think that it wants.

3. The proscriptions are inspired by Qadafi's neo-Islamism, recently expressed in his "cultural revolution." While some of the Committee members undoubtedly advocate a return to traditional —or Islamic—values, they lack the Colonel's militancy. Some of the journalists involved are friends, or at least protégés, of the Libyan leader.

4. The proscribed writers had personally displeased those in authority. Such a personal view of the proscriptions seems hard to reconcile with Sadat's nature, which no one who knows him has described as petty.

5. The enemies of Sadat, and perhaps of his deputy, Dr Hatem, have taken advantage of their extreme preoccupation with affairs of state to insinuate policies intended to encompass first their disrepute and then their downfall.

WHATEVER THE MOTIVES behind the strategy, the measures have caused problems for their sponsors. Her intellectuals are perhaps Egypt's last claim to Arab leadership, and the reaction to the proscriptions was shown at a conference of Arab writers held in Tunisia in March. When the Egyptian chairman, the novelist and former officer Yusif el-Sebai, refused to have the question placed on the agenda, or to confirm publicly (what he told Suhail Idris, the leader of the Lebanese delegation, in private) that the measures would "soon be rescinded", the Lebanese—representing the Arab country with the freest press —walked out.

Nor was it easy for the Egyptian government to recruit respected voices to defend its measures, or to find replacements for those proscribed.

Under the editorship of Ahmed Bahaeddin *al-Musawwar* was Egypt's most interesting weekly. Bahaeddin's place as editor (and also as chairman of the board of *Dar al-Hillal*, the largest publishing concern in the Middle East) has been filled by Fikry Abbaza, a septuagenarian pasha who headed the Journalist's Syndicate under King Farouk. Fikry Pasha's deputy, Saleh Gowdat, has been the one writer to attack his confrères. Gowdat is a poet of the school which went out of fashion under Nasser (which may help to explain his spleen). His verses exemplify techniques which, whatever their charm, have been repudiated by younger poets. Two examples (at one epoch they won their author admission to primary school text-books) show the commonest of these techniques. First, a euphonious play on words:

Al-fen min ya'arafu ghair al-farouq wa yara'u?
(Art, who should know it if not the Farouk and foster it?)

The late king's name meant in Arabic "he who discriminates".

Second, verbal repetition:

Al-layla 'aid al-shabab al-layla 'aidek!
(Tonight is the feast of youth, tonight is your feast.)

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The poem of which this was part was set to music and sung annually on Farouk's birthday.

Gowdat enthusiastically endorsed the deposition of writers who, under Nasser, had dismissed him as a hanky-poet and a reactionary. *Al-Kawakab,* a cinema magazine, published his hastily written encomium on the first proscriptions; his elevation to Dar al-Hillal followed closely on this prudent outburst. On 6 April he attacked the Tunis conference with a polemic in *al-Musawwar* entitled: "*Is It a Conference for Poetry and Literature—or is it a Conspiracy against Egypt?*"

> "Our wretched colleagues, those who deny God's word and believe in the Devil, those who inflicted intellectual terror on this peaceful land for long years—now under the slogan of Revolution, now under the slogan of Nasserism, now under the slogan of Progress—these wretched colleagues, once they were ousted from the field of information by our people as represented in the Arab Socialist Union, since this field is to be cultivated only by the servants of the honest and the believing word, those who believe in God and the national cause—these wretches who had failed to work in Egypt now worked abroad against Egypt thanks to hostile radio stations and the Enemy press, their link with which was their venal, anti-Egyptian friends. . . ."

This led to an attack on Max Rodinson, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir (referred to simply as Sartre's mistress) for setting up a Paris committee to help Egyptian writers, and an attack of course on Suhail Idris and the Lebanese.

A night-club friend of Field-Marshal Amer once popularised one poem by Saleh Gowdat even in Nasser's time:

Ask the tears of my eyes
as they come and go,
Ask then my pillow
my loneliness to tell. . . .

Gowdat must be asking his pillow the same question if he seeks the companionship of writers. Despite a climate in which moral courage has been an exotic bloom, a striking solidarity has joined banned to unbanned. One playwright, when I asked him if he was on the list, answered: "No, I'm ashamed to say." There is also a widespread dread lest advances in content and technique yield to the returning kitsch of the 1940s.

But after the initial shock came less discouraging omens. Not only public but governmental opinion seemed increasingly to support the writers. The Gowdat line was unheard in the ministries intimately concerned. On the contrary, everyone disclaimed responsibility for the grand strategy, or the "little lists." Sadat certainly shared the disapproval or the embarassment. Just before insisting that the writers be paid in full, he "promoted" Muhammad Osman to the governorship of remote Assiout; another committee member was promoted to Giza. The April choice of Yusif el-Sebai to be Minister of Culture and of Dr Murad Ghaleb (former ambassador to Moscow) to be Minister of Information, both of them under Dr Hatem in the cabinet headed by Sadat himself, was significant and surprising. For while el-Sebai had been unable to give positive answers in Tunis, the report that he was doing his best behind the scenes was confirmed by his first public lecture as minister on April 10. He then openly stated, in answer to a student's question, that the silenced Naguib Mahfouz was Egypt's best novelist and the banned Yusif Idris Egypt's leading writer of short stories. Dr Ghaleb, a known liberal, was the personal friend of many of the journalists seconded to his new ministry; he would assuredly make their sojourn as enjoyable and as brief as possible.

THE WRITER WHO SIGNALLED the start of the conflict was perhaps fated to signal its approaching resolution. Early in the crisis Towfik al-Hakim was received by President Sadat. Although pictures of the meeting were published, there was less meeting of minds than these implied. While al-Hakim insisted on the application of general principles, not particular clemencies, Sadat was still hurt that a writer whose works he had once taken with him to his prison cell had now turned against him.

Then on 1 June, the eve of the Security Council debate with which Egypt hoped to resolve the Middle East deadlock, the basic cause of most of the strains in Cairo, *al-Ahram* published a one-page extract from al-Hakim's memoirs. It referred to the 1930s, but both its title, *Civilisation and Dialogue,* and its theme were topical. Recalling the dispute between two writers in his youth—one a modernising Copt, the other a traditionalist Muslim—al-Hakim recounted how each had benefited from the other when they stopped wrangling and began listening. The incident was told in detail and with humour.

"These memories were in my mind," he concluded, "when I met the President." As though to point the moral, the page was embellished with the drawing of a dove and what seemed to be an olive branch.

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LETTERS

Labedz v. R's "Empire"

"COLUMN" (ENCOUNTER, July) contains, I am afraid, some very dubious propositions.

Ever since Harold Macmillan made his facile remark about Europeans after the war playing Greeks to the Americans' Romans, the analogy has become a journalistic cliché. I am surprised at *R*'s belated discovery that "Washington has become a new Rome."

One may well wish that this were the case; but it is not. Though Europeans are undoubtedly ready to play at being the Athenians on a sunny day in the *agora* (which means not paying enough for their own defence and security), Americans are not like Romans and show little inclination to play such a role. Yet one of the myths which gained currency after the last World War is based on the so-called imperial character of the post-War American evolution. The number of people who have contributed to this myth is legion, and now *R* adds to the confusion by telling us that "presidential election confers a mystical authority comparable to that which was conveyed by the ceremonial oil traditionally poured on the head of a Holy Roman Emperor." *R* adds: "Sometimes one wonders why President Kennedy did not proclaim Washington the Fourth Rome."

One can, I suppose, continue in the same vein and compare the sending of American "advisers" to Viet Nam by President Kennedy to the crossing of the Rubicon, the speeches of Senator McGovern to those of Cicero, and Senator Sam Ervin to Cato. But somehow the parallels do not fit. When Caesar crossed the Rubicon the historic results were rather different. And surely the faithful Mr Gordon Liddy who has refused to testify in the Watergate affair is no Mucius Scaevola embodying Roman virtues and endurance.

Americans never had an imperial fondness for martial virtues, and were indeed too greatly attracted by immediate results ever to develop an imperial ethos. *Civis Romanus sum* reflected a belief in both the splendour of the Republic (later of the Empire) and in the civilising mission of Rome. None of this exists in any comparable form in the United States. Americans have been catapulted into a world role absurdly unprepared for it—and very much against their own inclinations. They played it with deep reluctance. To talk about American empire is to engage in sheer mythopoeia.

ONE ONLY HAS TO LOOK at some examples of this reluctance to see the point. President Wilson brought America into the First World War but he was elected on a platform committed to just the opposite; after the war he saw the nation withdrawing again into an isolationist shell. It was not Roosevelt victoriously overcoming the isolationists, but Pearl Harbour which got America militarily involved in World War II; and it was Hitler who took the initiative by declaring war on the USA. After the War, when Stalin was busily incorporating Eastern Europe into his system of satellites, the old Yankee cry of "Bring our boys home!" promptly led to the demobilisation of practically the entire American army in Europe.

America was politically unprepared for the post-War conflict. Roosevelt believed that in Teheran and Yalta he had laid down the basis for post-War co-operation with the Soviet Union. After the War America was ready to give up its atomic monopoly on the conditions contained in the Baruch Plan, but found that the Soviet Union perceived the situation in cold terms of struggle, not of warm friendly compromise. At the time when the American "revisionist" historians are plagiarising "the Stalinist School of Falsification" on the subject of the Cold War, one should recall that America met its diplomatic challenge with a defensive premise of "containment" and not with the idea of imperial expansion.

It is, therefore, singularly inappropriate for *R* to treat Kennedy's declaration at the Berlin Wall (*"Ich bin ein Berliner"*) as an indication of his "imperial" attitude. He asks with a misplaced *gravitas*, and without his usual sense of humour, "by what right" Kennedy made this declaration: "No one was ever less like a Berliner, he was not a native of Berlin, however high his momentary popularity may have been. . . ."

Thus it seems that if Kennedy had been born in Berlin or was "more like a Berliner", it would have been no imperial sin for him to make such a declaration. But then *R* reproaches him for some (unspecified) speeches which allegedly contained reminiscences of old calls for world domination:

> *Heute gehört uns Deutschland,*
> *Und morgen die ganze Welt.*

So it does seem that, for *R*, Kennedy had, after all, *something* in common with the Berliners (who used to sing it frequently). According to *R*, "the imperial theme has been repeatedly announced" in Washington; yet we know that the "empire-builders" there still sing "Yankee Doodle Dandy" or "America, the Beautiful" and have yet to produce a hymn more appropriate for imperial expansion. *R* has no doubt that Kennedy's little sentence—only intended to bolster the morale of West Berliners after the building of the 1961 Wall—had the implication of "a universal claim" of an emperor bent on imperial expansion. However, in the political context of the time, it was regarded as a quite legitimate defence of Western positions when Khrushchev created the Berlin crisis by his own crude threats. Is *R* suggesting that Kennedy should have submitted to them? Was *R* of that opinion at the time? If not, he should be a bit more explicit about the implications of his argument now.

R's arguments seem to be largely based on Henry Fairlie's new book, *The Kennedy Promise*, which Arthur Schlesinger Jr. recently described as "Mr. Fairlie's Ruritanian romance." In this book, which is a curious amalgam of conservative philosophy and New Left historical premises, Kennedy is depicted (in Schlesinger's words) as "the champion of the Pax Americana, the wholly-committed exponent of the American Empire" (*Commonweal*, 25 May 1973). In fact Kennedy was a young Hamlet—rather than a Julius Caesar—as his withdrawal of the air cover during the Bay of Pigs operation indicates. His famous American University speech can hardly be taken as compatible with an *"Amerika über alles"* attitude.

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STRIPPED OF MYTHS and mystifications, post-War history cannot in any sensible way be described as witnessing the rise of "the American empire." It did nothing of the sort. In the 1960s isolationism re-emerged in a new form. The United States has gradually given up its strategic military superiority and (under the "anti-Communist" Nixon) accepted nuclear parity with the USSR, withdrawal from Viet Nam and the recognition of East Germany. Are these giant strides towards some Fourth Rome?

What we *have* been witnessing in the last three decades is the rise of the Soviet empire which America, intermittently and half-heartedly, tried to obstruct. The most striking characteristic of American foreign policy during that period was not "imperial self-confidence", but the discrepancy between the material power of the USA and its lack of sheer political will (not to mention the vaunted imperial ambition). The agonising hesitations in using its great potential intelligently were accompanied by the naïve belief in technology as a substitute for political determination. This led to spasmodic follies. Viet Nam is an illustration of the *impotence*, not of the *arrogance* of American power. It is not recorded that the Romans withdrew from Judaea after the Bar Kochba uprising (and their "technological superiority" was far less striking than that of the Americans in Viet Nam).

Harold Macmillan's jejune analogy was utterly wrong. There never was an American empire. An empire cannot be built without an imperial idea and the political will to implement it—any more than a eunuch can commit rape. *R* need not worry. An American President, as in Voltaire's phrase, is neither a Roman, nor an Emperor nor Holy. No analogy could be more off the mark than that between Imperial Rome and contemporary Washington. The question is: What happens to the Greeks when Romans are not Romans?

LEOPOLD LABEDZ

Editor, Survey Magazine,
London

Apfelstrudel

I AM RATHER OUT OF TOUCH with current North London speech rhythms, but even so I am surprised to read in Gillian Tindall's short story [ENCOUNTER, May], Morris Fenner, an apparently *ur*-Jewish type who uses the word schmuck and asks a friend round for coffee and apfelstrudel (as if he lived in Brooklyn), saying "Seamus, you old bugger, if you do this again, I'll set the rozzers on you. Straight up, I mean it." Try the phrase on your tongue, Sir. Try it with a variety of accents and intonations. Consider the jocular "old bugger", instead of the more forceful "stupid bugger" or even "bloody sod", matched with the pre-War slang "rozzers", and the Old High Cockney use of "straight"—or misuse, for would not the phrase have been "straight I am telling you"?

Would Miss Tindall say if she has heard this sentence spoken by some one like Morris Fenner, journalist and presumably not the real Morris Finer, Q.C., nor his brother Leslie Finer, journalist?

Incidentally, the Irish telephone directory gives no one of the name Lannion. One is entitled to expect more verisimilitude from a piece called "a True Story."

D. C. ROSE

Kealkill,
County Cork,
Eire

THE ANSWER to the question—have I actually heard anyone say "Seamus, you old bugger, if you do this again, I'll set the rozzers on you. Straight up, I mean it"—is Yes, I have. Mr Rose is right about the dated elements in Morris Fenner's speech (no legal connections) but they, like the apfelstrudel, are there on purpose. As for there being no Lannions in the Irish telephone directory, I am delighted to hear it. The day the story was published I was in fact accosted by a literary Seamus at a party, who said he'd got the message about drink and could I assure him that the story was merely true and not prophetic as well.

GILLIAN TINDALL

London

Barbara Wootton's China

CAN ENCOUNTER be edging toward the intelligentsia's Departments of Misinformation, too? "From superficial observation" ["Journey to China", ENCOUNTER, June], nonsenses Barbara Wootton, "I would conclude that a class hierarchy, Western-style, does not exist in China." How can one "conclude" anything so important, on the basis of—indeed—"superficial observation"? How, more specifically, have the inane nerve to publicise generalising conclusions concerning the thoughts and feelings of—what is it?—800 million Chinese people when one's communicated only with a few officially-selected samples, via interpreters? Did Barbara Wootton really think anyone would talk out to her against the official religion, when its representatives were watchfully present? Yet she writes with "certitude" of a "massive religious conversion." As for the "lack of a class hierarchy," in one paragraph above this foolish claim, stands an observation that, "although we were told that no private cars" are "allowed, the car parks outside our hotels were fairly well occupied in the evenings . . presumably" by privately used (she says) "publicly owned" automobiles. Didn't ENCOUNTER, if not Barbara Wootton —who may want another visa and interesting trip through China—notice the contradiction?

Maoism may well—along and in contrast with its neo-Stalinist heritage—have ideas and even practices of great value for the world. The mass effort toward unselfishness and community spirit is only one important item. Our understanding of what may just possibly be experiments of general value alongside the presumably stultifying totalitarianism isn't helped by the kind of superficial nonsense reminiscent of those blind Western encomiums to Russian Stalinism.

P.-M. MAYER

Nice, France

IN REPLY to your correspondent P.-M. Mayer, I would say that, as repeatedly emphasised in my article, my observations about China did not claim to be more than the impressions of a short-term visitor. I would also submit that, when a country has long been almost

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totally isolated from the Western world, and opportunities for study in depth are very restricted, records of such observations are not without value, provided that the author makes clear their unavoidable limitations.

On the specific points raised by your correspondent:

1. I never referred with "certitude" (his quotation marks) to a massive religious conversion. This word does not appear in my article. I said that my personal impression, shared by many of my companions, was that we were witnessing such a conversion.

2. I also said that the magic of China's new ideology unquestionably works—at present. The evidence for this is first, the amazingly rapid spread of new housing, factories and agricultural developments which any visitor can see with his own eyes; and, second, the observations of foreign residents, including those not particularly sympathetic to the régime, who gave this as their opinion. These achievements are certainly not the result of monetary incentives, so they must be ascribed either to popular enthusiasm or to slavery. In the light of the demeanour of the people I saw and the things I heard said, I find the former of these hypotheses the more credible.

3. The presence or absence of a Western-style class structure is one feature which is apparent even to the casual observer since it is manifest in dress, shops, cars and the like. With minor exceptions, no hierarchy is observable in Chinese modes of dressing, and if there are a few cars parked outside hotels their extreme rarity on the roads confirms the view that they cannot be accessible to individuals constituting an upper class. The Chinese all go to the same schools, in factories all eat in the same canteens, and in the cities there is nothing comparable with our "West End" and "East End"; and while there is still much poor housing, there is no affluent suburbia.

4. I certainly did not expect any Chinese to talk against the "official religion." I merely registered that there is such a religion and that great pains are taken to see that the masses study it.

I do not know whether Mr Mayer has himself visited Communist China. If he has and his impressions were different from mine, it would be interesting to hear them. If he has not, I do not think he is entitled to dismiss my impressions as "superficial nonsense."

BARBARA WOOTTON

House of Lords

(Poetic) Waterfalls

Mr DOUGLAS DUNN in reviewing my recently published *Funland and Other Poems* [ENCOUNTER, June], is kind enough to write, "A poem like 'Three Street Musicians', for example, is a good illustration of what he does well." But your reviewer then goes on to object to a phrase in that poem—"unceasing waterfalls of music"—which, he says, "is just too easy, poetic in the bad sense." Quite right. But I did not write it. I wrote "unceasing waterfalls of traffic" which, I trust, is altogether more accurate than the other soft, poetic phrase. I feel sure that accuracy is generally a quality that your reviewer values highly.

DANNIE ABSE

London

AUTHORS

Louise Collis has published nine books, including fiction and biography, the most recent being *A Private View of Stanley Spencer* (Heinemann, 1972). . . .

Michael Shanks's career in economics and industrial policy led him from journalism (with the *Financial Times* and *Sunday Times*) to industry (British Leyland Motor Corporation and British Oxygen). He has recently been appointed Director General for Social Affairs for the Commission of the European Communities. His books include *The Stagnant Society* (1961), *Britain and the New Europe* (co-author, 1962), and *The Innovators* (1967); Macmillan Press will publish *The Quest for Growth* this summer. His most recent article in ENCOUNTER was "The English Sickness" (January 1972). . . .

Fania Pascal was born in the Ukraine in 1901, left Russia after the First World War to study philosophy in Berlin, and came to England in 1930. . . .

Walter Allen is Professor of English in the New University of Ulster, and is also a literary journalist, author and broadcaster. Among his numerous books are *Reading a Novel* (1949), *The English Novel* (1954), *Tradition and Dream* (1964), and *Transatlantic Crossing* (1971). *The Roaring Queen* by Wyndham Lewis will shortly be published by Secker & Warburg (London) and Liveright (New York). . . .

Margot Lyon was the correspondent for *The Economist* in Belgium from 1960–63, and then for the *New Statesman* and *The Guardian* in Paris, where she now lives. She contributes to various American newspapers, and is the author of *Belgium* (Thames & Hudson, 1971). . . .

Margaret Drabble's latest novel is *The Needle's Eye* (Weidenfield). She is working on a study of Arnold Bennett. . . .

Desmond Stewart, who has written extensively on the Middle East, now lives in Cyprus. His most recent book, *The Middle East: Temple of Janus*, was published in 1972 and his biography of Theodor Herzl will appear next year (Doubleday, New York, and Hamish Hamilton, London). His "Arabian Notebook" appeared in the June 1969 ENCOUNTER. . . .

Peter Schmid, an editor of *Die Weltwoche* (Zurich), writes regularly for ENCOUNTER. His most recent contribution was "The Clergyman & the Guerrilla" (December 1972). . . .

David Rudkin is the author of several plays for stage, television and radio, including *Afore Night Come*. His play, *Cries from Casement as his bones are brought to Dublin*, was broadcast by the BBC on Radio 3 in February this year.

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The Good Doctor Regrets

WHO IS AN *intellectual? Agnew's "effete snob"? Voltaire's "crusader for human rights"? Mencken's "debunker of myths"? Bertrand Russell's academic "educated beyond his intelligence"?*

I suppose it might be just safe to say that it is, at the very least, a quasi-literate man (and, on occasion, a woman) who has a mind. But does he, or she ever change it? To be critical and self-critical; to qualify one's strongly-held opinions; to revise ingenious theories; to change one's mind when faced with new arguments and surprising evidence—all this must surely be a necessary quality of the intellectual life. Yet how many among our intelligentsia ever see a new light when once they have been dazzled by their first blinding illumination?

The most dramatic news of the year on this front is no doubt the recantation of Dr R. D. Laing, a most unexpected example of the break-out from the vicious circle of self-certifying theories. He knew that the true psychiatry was "anti-psychiatry". He understood that it was not the patient that was sick but society. But, according to a recent report in The Times, *after Laing's return from almost two years of preaching to American enthusiasts, the good doctor is now regretting it all.*

> **"Dr. R. D. Laing, best known as the leader of the anti-psychiatry movement here and in America (and in addition a darling of the New Left), now plans to dissociate himself from the thriving anti-psychiatry movement which has built itself up on his name. . . . In the past 18 months, talks on 'Laingian therapy', on which 'anti-psychiatry' is supposedly based, have been a commonplace on the American lecture circuit. The ideas put forward have included scrapping the formal doctor/patient relationship in favour of a more intimate relationship and replacing regular treatment with life in a therapeutic community. Mental illness in general and schizophrenia in particular is blamed on the sick person's immediate family and on the lunacy of established society as a whole. Madness was suddenly both noble and chic."**

But now the noble madness is gone, and the chic has passed into the dust-bin of yesterday's fashions. It was all apparently a misunderstanding. Dr Laing explains that the phrase "anti-psychiatry" was not his but rather David Cooper's; and, like the absent Trotsky in Odessa while Stalin was seizing power in Moscow, his excuse is that "People have been a bit cynical carrying it on while I was away, so I think I have to have a public dissociation now."

As he put it to the Times *reporter, who registered it as if it were a change in the Top of the Pops chart, "I'm singing a new song. . . ." What about the old tune? I remember his powerful melodic line at the Dialectics of Liberation conference in London in 1967, as he harmonised in a Roundhouse quartet with Stokely Carmichael, Paul Goodman, and Dr Herbert Marcuse. Everything was syncopated with everything else—the war in Viet Nam, colonialism in the Third World, the viciousness of the capitalist system, and all the neurotic varieties of contemporary madness. But, as he now explains, the version of his talk was published and used without his permission. Apparently it was some kind of plot (even if the conspirators remain vague and unnamed): "It suited people to be able to pin me out there in that ideological position. . . ." Evidently he had never really intended to make "an attack on families". He now wants to set the record straight. "I'm not against families. I have a very nice one here. And although I have tried to show how families go wrong, I think they are one of the best relics of a crumbling system we have to hang on to. . . ."*

What about the use of LSD in Laingian therapy? This made him a hero of the counter-culture. Now he says that he "never was an apostle of the drug experience", like, say, Dr Timothy Leary; in fact he always tried to exercise "restraint", prescribed drugs for only very few of his patients (and then for never more than "three or four sessions"), and reassures us that he denied drugs—oh, repressive bourgeois medicine-man!—"to many many who asked me for them. . . ."

Did he ever mean to deify madness, which was after all the thesis made fashionable by his book on The Politics of Experience? *Never. He never meant to imply that "madness is superior to true sanity. I'm sorry if I put that idea into people. I would never recommend madness, although I do think that some people can come through a regression and a new birth into a good place. . . ." As for all those despised conventional doctors who tried to help their patients in a formal and established way, he is now prepared to tolerate and defend those who offer tranquillizers and even electric shock therapy.*

Sweet are the uses of recantation, but how on earth will one ever be able to catch up with and nullify all the cant that has already been sent out in the world? R. D. Laing's works, especially in their paper-back editions, have sold in the millions of copies. The other evening, going home on the Northern Line underground to Highgate, I saw a brighteyed young pair, both in freshly-faded blue-jeans, huddled together and fingering the pages of the Penguin edition of The Divided Self. *Will the publishers be issuing an errata slip for every copy they printed? Somebody ought to sue.*

*

Bella, Bella

DOCTOR-INTELLECTUALS, *then, sometimes change their theory and their practice; journalist-intellectuals are occasionally known to change their story, to admit a mistake (or worse). I remember following the campaign in New York City last year for the re-election of Mrs Bella Abzug to the U.S. Congress; and having known her when we were both collegiate editors and writers in the 1930s, I wondered from the various newspaper reports whether she had really become so mellow and flexible over the years. Bella, I was reliably told, hadn't revised a single article of faith since we used to argue about the Moscow Trials. Then surely Zionism remained for her a contemptible Imperialist ruse—and, in that case, how could she ever capture enough of the Jewish vote in New York to win her*

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Congressional seat?

There was a flurry of controversy in the press. Had she in fact said that she was "against the jets for Israel"? Was the view ascribed to her truly hers, namely, that she wouldn't "shed a tear" if Tel Aviv "went down the drain"? Among Mrs Abzug's supporters was that contentious Manhattan weekly, The Village Voice, *and nobody rallied more valiantly to Bella's defence than that eminent New Left journalist, Jack Newfield. Bella was gentle, Bella was moderate, Bella would never say such ugly things.*

Now we have the truth of the matter. Journalists often wrestle with their conscience, but it is rare that their conscience wins. Mr Newfield had second thoughts. A friend recently sent me a clipping from The Village Voice *in which Newfield finally recognises that "the problem is her character" (and presumably his own). "There is a limit," he now sees, "to the personal viciousness permissible within the politics of change. . . ." And he makes a confession.*

"I was there when Bella said . . . she was against the jets for Israel. And then I watched her deny she ever said it. And finally I lied, and denied she ever said it, so that she might defeat [her opponent]. I am now ashamed of all that.

"Bella is a divisive figure. . . . She brings out the worst in people because humility and charity are not in her. You cannot disagree with Bella and have a human conversation. . . . The issue is neither ideology nor sentiment. The issue is character, and the diminution of the politics of insult and ego."

But as a Sunday bird-watcher of intellectual tergiversation I can safely predict that there will soon be more. Another late lesson is in the offing. Sooner or later the connection between ideas and character, between ideology and viciousness, between sentiment and human conversation will, in a new blinding illumination, suddenly be perceived. Watch this space.

*

Pugwash & After

NON-CONFORMIST INTELLECTUALS *have a built-in temperamental difficulty. They need to dissent from the orthodoxies of the day, but when a new heterodoxy begins to dominate the public discourse they feel compelled to become dissenters from their old dissent. Nothing seems so stale to us as an idea whose time has finally come.*

What has happened to that valiant passion for disarmament, total and uncompromising, which used to actuate those veteran campaigners for Peace and a Bombless World, Wayland and Elizabeth Young? We have recently been reminded of a bit of the history of our own Zeitgeist *by Professor Michael Howard (in the* Sunday Times):

"Back in the Fifties, Wayland and Elizabeth Young occupied a position a good deal left of centre. Assiduous at disarmament meetings of every kind, active in the foundation of the Pugwash movement, rich, well-meaning, slightly dotty, they seemed cast for the role of rather trendy Webbs. Everyone liked them, a few paranoid officials feared they were being manipulated by 'sinister influences', but no one took them very seriously—at first.

"Then people began to wonder. For one thing the Youngs were, like the Webbs, so very much better informed than anyone else. They worked at it harder. For another, those silly questions they asked did not, in retrospect, seem so silly after all. They simply saw the weaknesses of a position rather sooner than most people. Eventually the Webbs—sorry, the Youngs—drifted away from arms-control and applied their dreadful techniques elsewhere; no doubt with equally salutary if uncomfortable results. . . ."

As Lord Kennet, a junior minister in the Labour government, Wayland Young doubtless had achievements to his credit, especially in the field of the preservation of old English churches (with no uncomfortable theological prejudices involved). But the world still longs for "a lasting peace" and the Bombs are everywhere at the ready. On several occasions in the past we gave ENCOUNTER *space to the Youngs to argue the case against Hydrogen-happy cold warriors who were grimly confident that with just one more ballistic missile, one more nuclear test, one more underground shelter programme, we would all be fail-safe.*

Now after many years Disarmament is being revisited; but the situation is different and, as the old song had it, our line has changed again. According to Elizabeth Young in her recent book, A Farewell to Arms Control,

"The sum of public consciousness, which retained residual cold-war sludge long after Krushchev had denounced Stalin, now retains residual thaw sludge long after Krushchev has gone and the Soviet system has begun, ideologically and militarily, to freeze up again. Some news travels slowly."

Old friends are now fools for still believing that disarmament is simply a matter of Americans expiating their guilt and the U.S.A. doing something unilaterally about those dangerous toys. Enlightened technical experts who had all the peace-loving answers of grand policy are now dismissed: ". . . scientists were excited and very highly motivated; no politician in his senses would any longer be able to rely on their advice."

Summing up the turn to a hard-nosed realism (can we detect here the beginnings of a new cycle of anti-Anti-Cold-Warism?), Professor Howard notes:

"Not even the Youngs were saying that ten years ago: they left it to Fascist beasts like Albert Wohlstetter and Hedley Bull. Still, better late than never. With the Pugwash Movement now being taken over by the development lobby, the arms control movement probably can be written off as a comparatively brief but far from discreditable episode in international history. Perhaps it deserves a rather more sympathetic epitaph than this dismissive farewell."

But then intellectuals have always been best at giving birth to ideas. Burying them they leave to the logic of history.

M.J.L.

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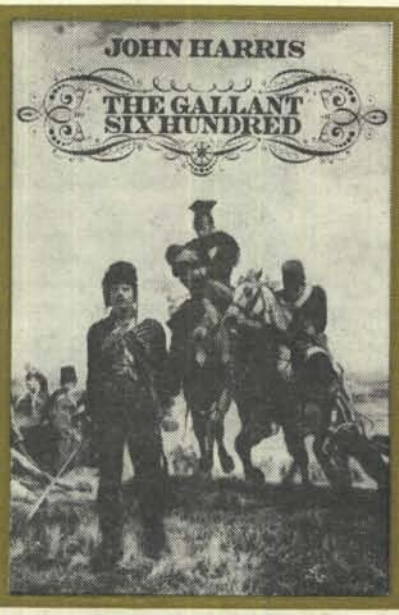

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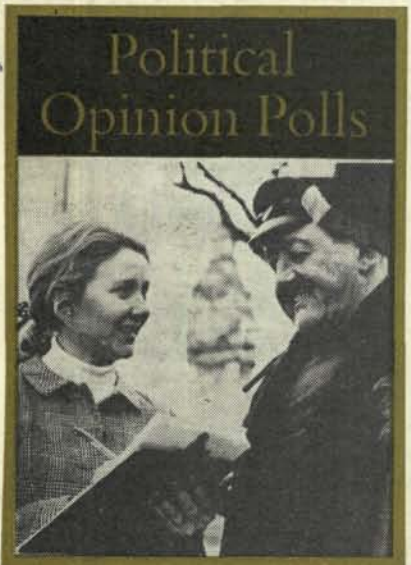

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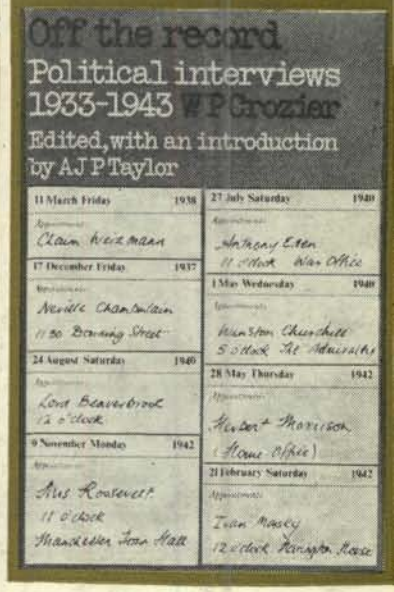

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